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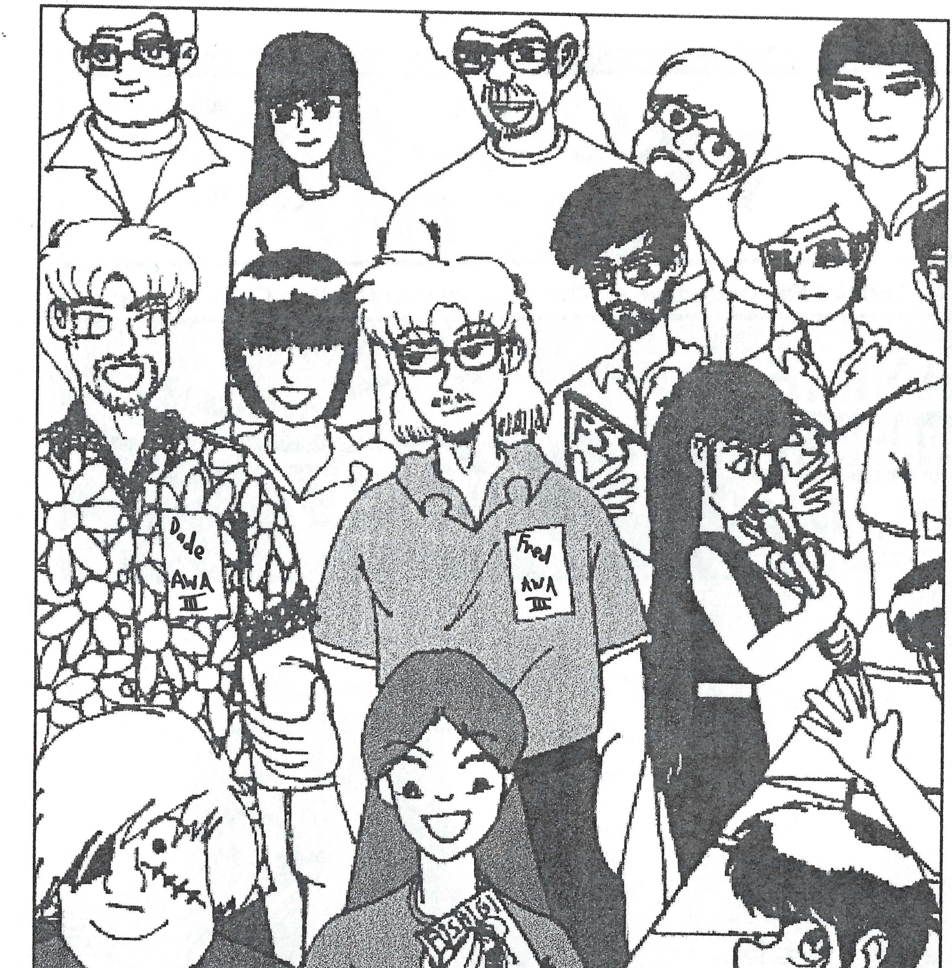
PROJECT JACO

The Official Fan-Magazine of The Japanese Animation Club of Orlando

ANIME
WEEKEND
ATLANTA
JAPANESE ANIMATION FESTIVAL
1997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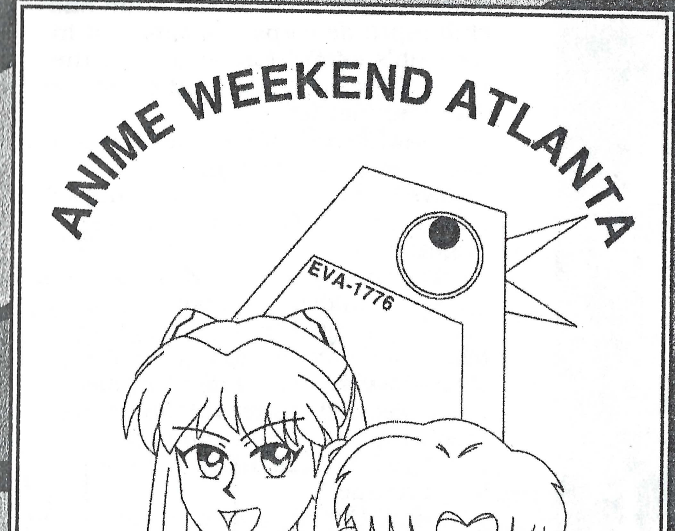
PROJECT JACO

Anime Weekend Atlanta 3

After Convention Special


ANIME WEEKEND ATLANTA
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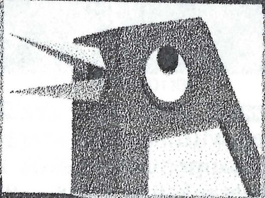

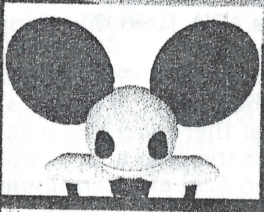

About the cover:
"The Present!" The first squadron of the Disneyana Rebel Alliance heads into destiny at AWA.
By Dade W. Bell ©1997

"It's Deja Vu all over again!"
-Yogi Berra

Some Words From The Editor:

One year. A lot sure can happen in one year. You see, it was a year ago, that my experiences at AWA got me into a frenzy of club spirit and made me want to bring back this fanzine. And now here we are a year later, with an AWA special dedicated to the happenings of AWA 1997. I think this is a fitting anniversary since it was AWA 1996 that jump-started this fanzine.

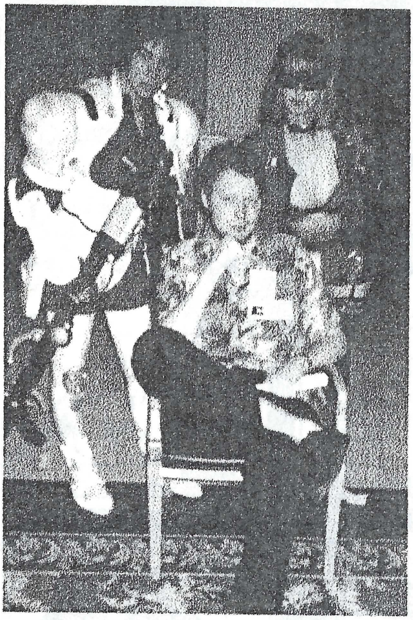

Photo: Spencer Carey

Since AWA 1996, JACO has gone through a lot of changes for the better. First there was Megacon 1997 that gave the club a lot of viability in the open field of entertainment. We had a big room with the biggest screen of the convention and had a flow of traffic moving nonstop in and out of the room.

Then there were the Anime Days held at Enterprise 1701 and Coliseum of Comics. These were successes in their own right. I was present at the day held at Enterprise and it was a lot of fun with the club gaining a couple of memberships. I'm told that the day at Coliseum went just as smoothly with another couple of memberships.

The year also saw more JACO social events occurring with parties and field trips to various places. Of course, the treks to Disney World were also a blast that culminated in the most popular issue of Project JACO produced under my tenure as Editor, the summer issue. The sense of fun and club *esprit de corps* was apparent in the club's summer activities and the issue of *Project JACO* for the summer captured that feeling.

We saw attendance at meetings grow, more new people wanting to get involved, and just an all around good feeling that JACO's future was very bright indeed.

This year also saw the departure of JACO's president and founding member, Fred Leggett from office. After being there for the club in some way since the very beginning, Fred has finally decided to "retire" and relax. Fred's my best friend and to him I say, "you deserve the rest and it's long overdue."

Thus, JACO has a new president and vice president. They're Ken Nabbe and Nicole Kintner respectively. Under their leadership, I'm sure the club is headed to new and exciting directions and I wish them both the best of luck.

And of course there's the club's trip to AWA 1997, of which this issue is about. It's been a heck of a year. I can't wait to see what this coming year holds for the club. I know it'll be great.

Dade W. Bell

-Dade W. Bell

"Cap'n Oscar"

karybdis@aol.com

Project JACO is a quarterly publication of the Japanese Animation Club of Orlando. A basic JACO annual silver membership is $15. A gold membership with JACO includes an automatic annual postpaid subscription to Project JACO. Gold memberships are $25 and are renewed annually. Platinum lifetime memberships are $60 and also include a lifetime Project JACO subscription. Issues of Project JACO can be purchased for $1.98 or $3 postpaid. Send payment to:

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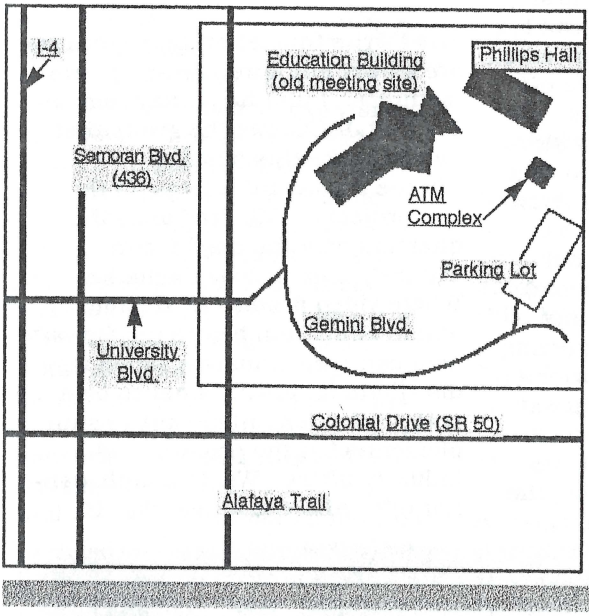
JACO meets every second and fourth Saturday of the month in room 115 at the Howard Phillips Hall at the University of Central Florida. Meetings begin at 7 p.m. Membership is encouraged, but not required to attend meetings.



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A Letter From The President

Actually 4,158 Letters And Characters, But Who's Counting?

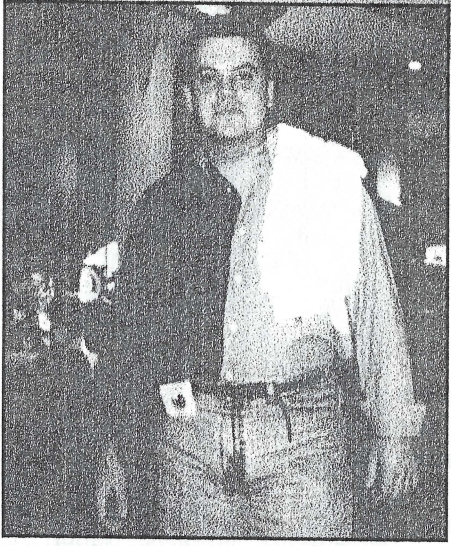


Photo: Eric Wampner

Anime Weekend Atlanta, now there was an adventure. It was my first true Anime only convention, and I was impressed. How such a diverse group as Anime X can pull this off astounds me. Only two things about AWA truly got under my skin. One, was that I was not able to find the one item I figured was a guarantee in the dealers room. That was the *Giant Robo* II BGM CD. I did find III, IV, and VI though. Second was the fact that I didn't see any new Anime. I guess I was expecting to see new stuff in the video rooms, but I guess with the club library at my house, I see most of the stuff anyway. If you had not heard, we have taken on the task as being the primary distribution group for the AWA Music Video Winner Tape. This tape (#270 in the club library) contains the winners of both the 1996 and 1997 AWA Music Video Contest winners, but as a special JACO bonus you get:

Dis Wars, a fan favorite at the immature film festival.

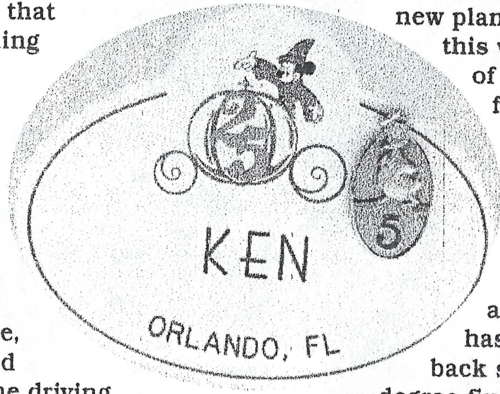
The Making of The Ozone Commandos, a Nabbe favorite.

The Ozone Commandos, how can you have the making of without the original.
And *The Corn Dog 7*, hell we had 12 minutes to waste on the tape.

As I write this letter, tape requests are slowly but surely heading into my home. I just hope they remember that JACO was the group that helped make this possible.

In the President' s letter in the last project JACO, Fred asks the question why the need for an 'Anime' club in today's market. Where video producers are able to obtain animation before the fan-subbers can even translate, much less distribute it. JACO is not to be a sole source for Anime, but to supplement what the professional industry offers. We, as a club, cannot offer *ALL* the Anime that is released. We are lucky to be offer the 273 tapes we offer now. Viz will never get around to releasing all 96 episodes of *Maison Ikkoku*, but we offer it to supplement what Viz has produced. When JACO was founded, almost 10 years ago, it was a bunch of guys huddled around a 19in TV, watching copies of MI, off Beta tapes, which Joe had made straight from Japanese TV. That was only way to view the genre. Now we have changed to fit the times. So I have to disagree with Mr. Leggett, JACO is still needed, as ever, in Anime fandom.

On the home front, you may have found out that things are looking quite well and better than expected with MegaCon. The challenges that were blocking our way have made me take a step back and realize, that we are good enough to be the driving force of a convention. The vision I see is JACON, or as I coined it, in a drunken stupor, RATCON. Where JACO will be able to determine what and where we show our animation. Where we can have our own cheesy guests and panels, where we discuss if Char was truly a Nazi or what would happen if Ranma got knocked up. Where we can string a Mickey Mouse by his neck and burn him in effigy. What is surprising, is that this vision is feasible, and is forefront in my mind as I plan the next 18 months. The six month plan has come to a close, but some things are just getting started.



On the programming front, there seems to be a few minor changes. After a failed attempt to show *Gundam 0080: War in the Pocket*, I have decided to drop back, and attempt to have a well rounded viewing, but not go overboard in the execution of it. The upcoming schedule ranges from *Harlock* to *Dragonball*, from *Debut* to *BurnUp*. Plenty of mechs, fantasy, and japaheno guns ' n hooters flicks. Seems I was just defining Anime in two groups, Mecha and non-Mecha, causing to leave quite a bit of the genre out of the loop. With my new plan of attack, I hope this will be a problem of the past, not the future.

As many of you can read, this is a letter from the President, my first official penning of any item as President. Fred has decided to take a back seat and get his degree finished, something many of us should do. Do not think that he has left JACO. Fred is just taking on a role as our Director of National Affairs. This allows Fred to keep his sanity, and continue to do the things he always enjoyed to do with JACO. With this, Miss Nicole Kintner has taken on my former duties as Vice-President. So expect her to be even more high profile than ever before.

As I bring another letter from the President to a close, I have to say that JACO is an ever growing group. A group that has more than doubled in size, since I returned in March. We must keep one thing in mind as we head off in the future. No matter what conventions we do, no matter what we make, no matter who joins, we are here for one primary goal... To sit around and watch cartoons. Everything else is just gravy.

-Kenneth Nabbe

President
Japanese Animation Club of
Orlando

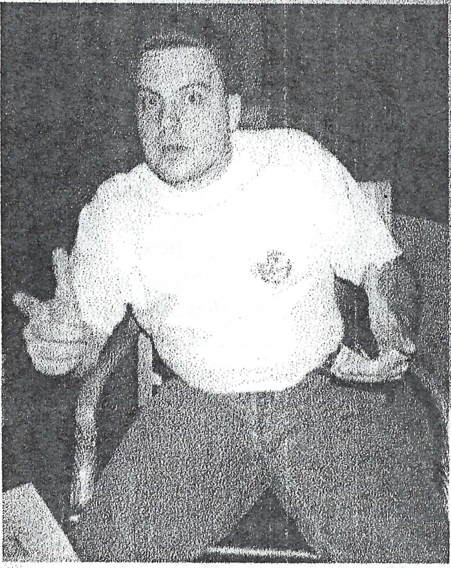


Photo: Nicole Kintner

JACO

JACO'S IN ATLANTA. ALL'S RIGHT WITH THE WORLD.

" Cap'n Oscar, the Ozone Commandos have gained ground against General Vague and the EPCOT© Federated Army. It seems Dr. Travis Kent has been captured and brainwashed, while General Vague is contemplating early retirement, and the sisters Neko and Kitten DuJour have been missing for days. As I look across the battlefield I wonder if MERV will finally crush our resistance, allowing Lord Eisner to prevail. Hopefully Professor Dark's adjustments have made the EVA-1776 ***FASTER, BETTER, STRONGER*** *so that it will be able to defeat the MERV's ultimate terror weapon, the 52nd Angel. Okay Oscar, its time to fire up the Big Chicken and assault the DisStar itself. Flame on buddy!!! It's Clobbern' Time!!!"*

TOGETHER, ALLEGENCE OR DEATH!!! BIG CHICKEN!!!

-Joey Snackpants, Esq.
A Hero With All That...and a bag of Funyuns.

ANIME WEEKEND ATLANTA III

The Post-Convention Report

By Lonny Volat

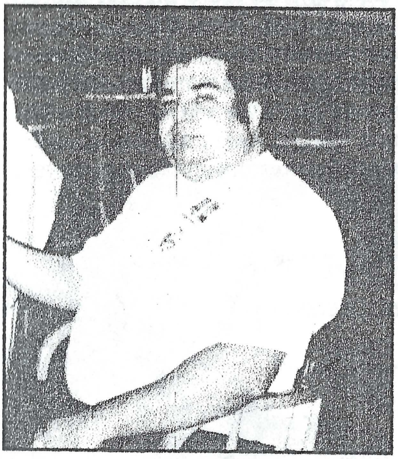


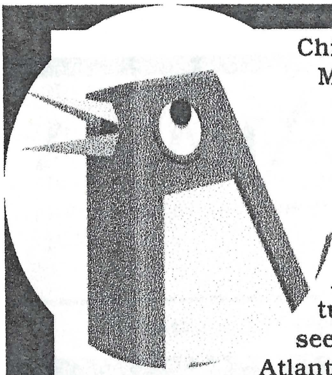
Photo: Eric Wampner

Okay, boys and girls! Our mighty Editor Supreme has allowed me the privilege of writing this year's convention review of AWA3. This will be a bit more generalized than the article from the previous year. I will not attempt to list a moment-by-moment report of everything that happened, but instead try to portray an overall impression of the convention. I also intend to spice it up with a healthy dose of SEX and VIOLENCE, so if you are in late-term pregnancy, or suffer from back or heart ailments, than I advise you to read no further. You have been warned.

Pre-Convention Activities

I went to Atlanta a few days in advance of the rest of the JACO contingent. My purpose in doing so was to spend a day or two with my best friend and former club president, Joe Vecchio. Joe had given me directions to where he worked in Marietta and, on a brisk Veterans' Day morning, I began the 400+ mile trek to Georgia. My little car, affectionately given the moniker of Mighty Geo, proved herself no slouch as she cruised away the miles. I arrived at the print shop where Joe works in the early evening hours, and after a brief reunion, we went to have dinner.

The following day, Joe showed me around Atlanta. It was a little rough, since Atlanta drivers are far and away the first I've ever had the displeasure of encountering. To add to the troubles, a front had stalled in the area, creating a drizzle that lasted over two days before the sun finally got through. With Mighty Geo's windshield wipers quickly deteriorating, it developed into quite a harrowing trip. But we managed to survive, and Joe showed me where the airport and hotel were located (separated by the entire city of Atlanta) as well as some of the sights, such as the many little Asian shops (where I was reacquainted with a wonderful snack called Pocky), the Iwase bookstore, and the infamous Big



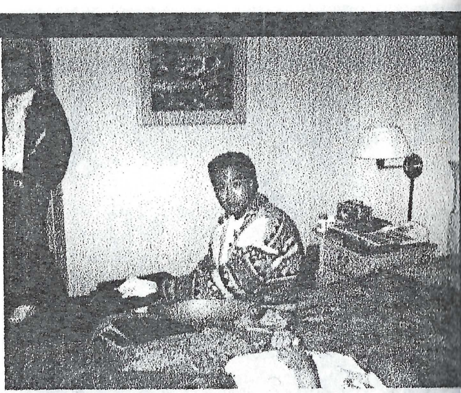


Photo: Nicole Kimmer

Chicken of Marietta. For those of you who have never seen this, let me explain something. All the pictures that I've seen of this Atlantean icon led me to believe it was some eight or nine feet tall, placed in front of a restaurant somewhere. In reality, the head of this monster loomed fully some twenty-five or thirty feet over a local KFC. Sure shocked the hell out of me.

The Hotel

This year' s AWA convention was held in the Marriott North Central, in the northeast section of Atlanta. The hotel was quite nice, (I remarked to Joe that maybe it was too nice, and did the staff have any idea what they were getting into) with close to three hundred rooms (which we almost completely filled) arranged on fifteen floors. The main area of the hotel was shaped like a triangle, with the rooms looking inward to an open concourse. There was a little apprehension on my part, knowing the reputations of some of the more libatious con attendees, that someone might tip over a balcony and leave a nasty stain on the carpet.

The rooms themselves were rather spartan, but given the fact that the average conventioneer spends little time in his room, I guess they were acceptable. Admittedly, I' ve stayed at a couple of the low-budget rooms at Disney that were bigger, nicer, and cost less. But still, the rooms were comfortable enough. The biggest problem was that they all seemed to come with a single king-sized bed (at least all the ones I entered), so many roll-aways were used.

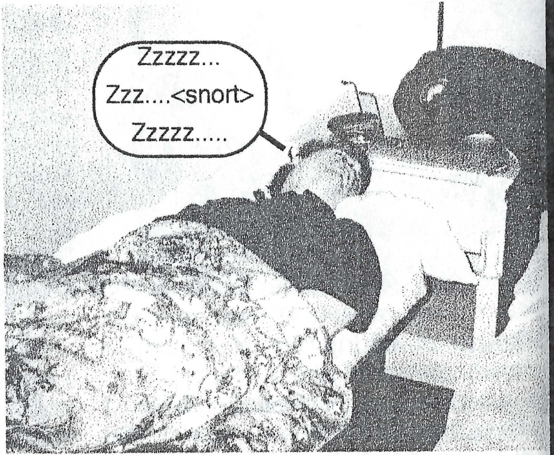

Zzzzz...
Zzz....<snort>
Zzzzz.....

Photo: Eric Wampler

The convention rooms were many, with the largest rooms (separated by a foldaway partition) set aside for panels and large activities (like the Costume Contest). Two more large rooms were earmarked as video rooms, another large room (with it' s own foyer) was to be the dealers' room. There was also a room set up for the Art Show, another for the scheduled Gatchaman Symposium, one for tabletop gaming, and yet another for video games. The convention' s Con Suite (where people could go to relax with a soda and some munchies, watch some TV or bullshit with friends) was located on the fifteenth floor of the main area. Unfortunately it was a little difficult to get anywhere, since the teeming masses kept the hotel' s triple-bank of elevators quite busy. Difficult, that is, for those Unenlightened who were not privy to the Ultimate Secret (the location of the staff elevator).

There was also a nice lounge with a well-stocked bar (from what I' ve heard), pool tables, and (most importantly) a theatre-style popcorn popper. The hotel' s dining area was attractive, if somewhat pricey. The staff was courteous and friendly, and didn' t seem overly bothered by people walking around in strange outfits.

Photo: Eric Wampner

Getting Everyone Together

The merry members of JACO were due to start gathering on Thursday. According to initial reports, a group consisting of Fearless Leader Fred Leggett, Ken Nabbe, Nicole Kintner, and Dade Bell were supposed to be the first to arrive. Their plane had landed at the Atlanta airport early in the morning, and they were going to rent a car. Joe and I had arrived at the hotel, expecting to find them, but they were not there yet.

" Hmmm," I thought. I wanted to get my luggage put away in the room, but most of the rooms (including mine) had been reserved on Fred' s credit card, so no one could get in until Fred was there. I did provide the list of room-reservation numbers (and the people who would be in them) to the hotel, so they could consult it as the JACOites arrived, but it still didn' t get me into the room. We simply had to wait for Fred.

After an hour or so, with Fred and party still not at the hotel, Joe and I left to go to the airport to get Jim Calbeto. After waiting at the airport for the plane to land and the passengers to disembark, we discovered that Jim was not aboard. " Aargh!!!" So back to the hotel we went. When we got there, we discovered that he was already at the hotel! It seems that Jim had taken an earlier flight, actually thinking that he was doing me a favor. (Before Fred and crew had decided to rent a car, the plan was for me to meet them and bring there luggage back to the Marriott, and they would take the MARTA. Jim figured that if he were at the airport when I

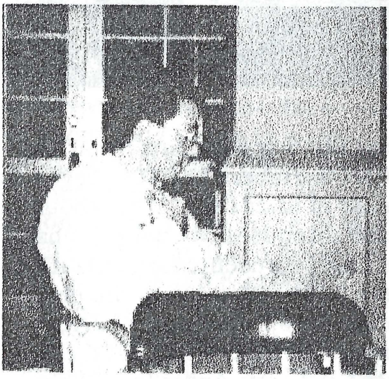


Photo: Eric Wampner

made the first trip, I wouldn' t have to go back for him later. But he didn't know about the car rental and was at the wrong gate when the others' plane landed.)

We hung out in the lobby for a while (Leggett's Legion still had not arrived and we were beginning to worry at that point) and finally Jim and I left to go back to the airport to pick up Alex Matulich. Fortunately for us (and Alex!) he had arrived on the flight he said he would be taking, and we all went back together. By this time, Fred and the others had shown up (seems that they just had to hit some anime/manga stores first), so we were able to get the luggage put up in the rooms and get down to some serious pre-convention fun.

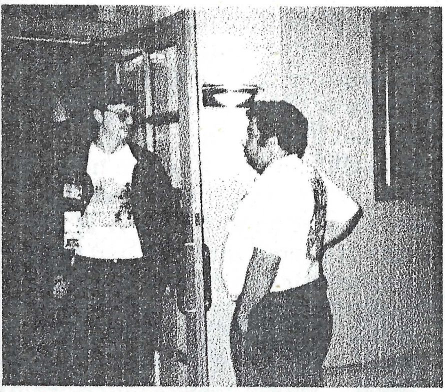


Photo: Eric Wampner

Other members of JACO began to trickle in after that. With about two dozen attendees, we were probably the best-represented organization there (other than the home crowd Anime-Xers). The cast of JACO (current members and past) consisted of Vanya Applebee, Chris Barr, Dade Bell, John Bohlen, Jim Calbeto, Spencer Carey, Michael Cox, Casey Hollis, Nicole Kintner, Joseph Kostura, Daric Kozlowski, Erik Larson, Fred Leggett, Alex Matulich, Ken Nabbe, Abraham Nantin, Brian Oigarden, Amanda Rotella, Jefferson Solerr, John Stepp, Joe Vecchio, and Eric Wampner. Oh yeah, and myself, of course. (If I left any names out of this list, I apologize.)

The Panels

This year's convention offered a wide array of panels for conventioneers to attend. Friday afternoon began with Fandom 101. Panelists included Carl Horn (editor of Animerica magazine), Don Yee (current president of the C/FO, a nationwide fan organization) and our own Dade Bell and Joe Vecchio.

Photo: Eric Wampner

The purpose of this opening panel was to talk about what it means to be an anime fan today, how fandom has grown from the college covens of the 70s (when fans watched eighth-generation dupes on expensive-but-low-quality VCRs), and where fandom is going as we close out the millenium. Other panels on Friday included Twenty Years Of The C/FO (featuring Don Yee, AWA chairman Dave Merrill, and ex-JACO president Joe Vecchio), and State Of The Industry, where guests Carl Horn, Steve Bennett & Kuni Kimura (of up-and-coming Studio Ironkat), and Neil Nadelman (translator and perennial convention guest) discussed anime and manga from the standpoint of the American companies that produce them.

Saturday, as one might imagine, was the busiest day for panels. Guests Carl Horn, Steve Bennett & Kuni Kimura, Bruce Lewis (of Star Blazers comic-zine), and Lea Hernandez (a prolific American manga artist), and Elin Winkler & Pat Duke (of Radio Comix) explained how to break into the manga industry with Cash From Cartoons and The American Manga Scene. JACO members Fred Leggett and Alex Matulich joined Tony Butler and members of the Fansub Invasion to discuss programming and technology used in Fan Subtitling. (Members of the audience kept trying to steer this in the direction of fansubbers vs. the industry, but the panelists kept deferring to a later panel on ethics.) Joe Vecchio was part of a panel discussing what its like Living In Japan. Carl Horn and Toshifumi Yoshida discussed one particular company' s future plans in Viz Communications Communicates. Corn Pone co-creator Matt Murray also had a special Star Blazers Perfect Memory, wherein episodes from the classic series were featured complete, with added footage that was edited out in the American release. Saturday also included several workshops. Lea Hernandez and Bruce Lewis were among those heading a workshop on Drawing Manga The Manga Way. Steve Bennett headed up the Cel Painting Workshop. Modeler extraordinaire Bill Mayo hosted a workshop on Anime Model Building.

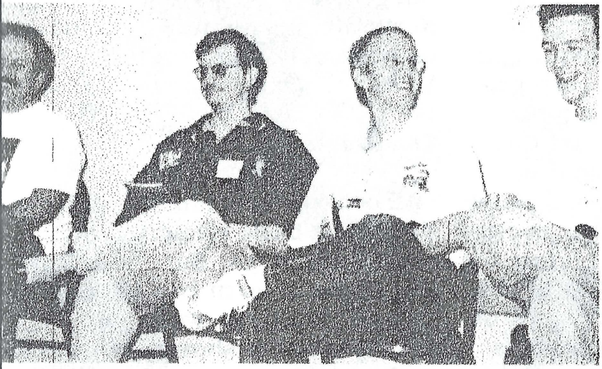


Photo Eric Mamorel

One particular panel on Saturday was very important to me. That was the Star Blazers Experience. This was hosted by my pal Joe and included as guest panelists Bruce Lewis (American manga artist who is currently involved in the Star Blazers comic book) and special guest Amy Howard. Amy was the voice actress whose honeyed tones brought to life the character of Nova; radar operator, nurse, and love-interest of Derek Wildstar. Before Robotech and Minmei, it was Nova who stirred the hormones of a generation of anime fans around the country. Amy enthralled her audience with her reminisces about those days —stories about long hours in a tiny recording booth and times spent with her fellow voice actors, including Tom Tweedy (the voice of Mark Venture, Amy admits to having a crush on Tom) and Ed Hayes (whose soft-yet-menacing expression gave life to the character Desslok of Gamilon in a way that many Star Blazers/Yamato enthusiasts think is even better than the original Japanese voice), the prankster of the crew.

Amy Howard is new to anime fandom. She never thought that something in her past had helped build the following that exists today. She had first heard about this through her nieces (who are also anime fans, but never knew that their aunt had participated in the industry) and was eventually contacted by the AWA staff. I'm sure that she was absolutely shocked at the reception she got during her introduction at the opening ceremonies Friday night. I'm sure that she is as happy to learn that she has fans as us fans were thrilled to meet her. I hope that she is successful in her plans to reunite some of the old members of the cast together at some future convention. (Especially if it is one that I can attend!)

Bruce Lewis (somewhat forgotten in Amy's presence) shed some light concerning tales that had been getting around concerning the future of Star Blazers. It seems that the Disney Corporation has acquired the rights to Star Blazers, and plans to release a live-action movie sometime in the not-too-distant future. The story will be basically faithful to the premise of the first season of the animated series —the Earth is attacked by an alien race and must send a vessel (an ancient hull refitted as a space cruiser) to the far reaches of outer space to get help to save the planet. But much of the story's elements will change in the typical politically-correct fashion. Nova, for instance, will be raised from the position of radar operator and morale-booster to the genius behind the creation of the Wave Motion Engine. And the ship itself will go from being the resurrected Yamato (can't have a Jap ship saving the world, after all) to the USS Arizona, or maybe the USS Missouri. Oh well.

There were a few panels on Sunday, as well. Fred Perry, creator of the Gold Digger comic, spoke about his works. There was a panel about the growing-in-leaps-and-bounds world of Anime Online. Alex Matulich, Tony Butler, and some members of the Fansub Invasion finally spoke about the Ethics of Fandom, a discussion that centered primarily on the legalities and moralities of subtitling in general and fan-subtitling of programs already being produced commercially. Finally, there was the Justice League Of Anime Veterans, where lots of old fogey anime war-horses got to reminisce about the " good ole' days" when we used to watch 8th generation copies of Fist Of The North Star (no subtitles, no dubs) on incredibly expensive 2-Head VCRs and loving every minute of it.

The Events

All conventions, broken down into their most basic elements, are social gatherings. Sure, we attend the panels to learn and discuss new things. Of course, we go into the dealers' hall to shovel out wads of cash and max out our plastic. But what makes the convention a truly fun and enjoyable experience are

the events. At no other time during the weekend are so many people gathered into one place en masse. These are what conventions are all about.

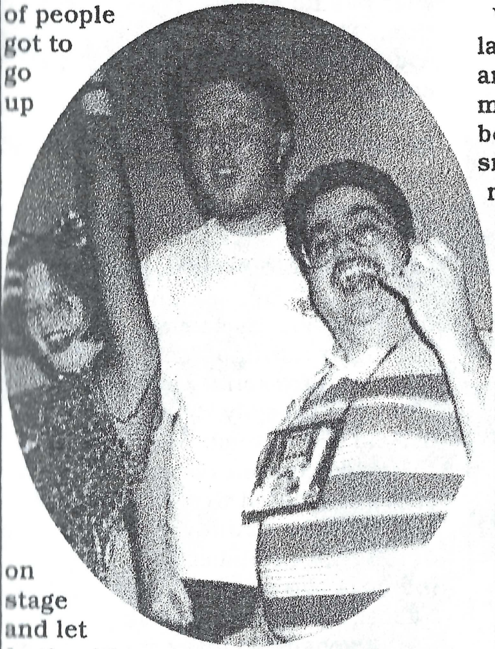


Photo: Spencer Carey

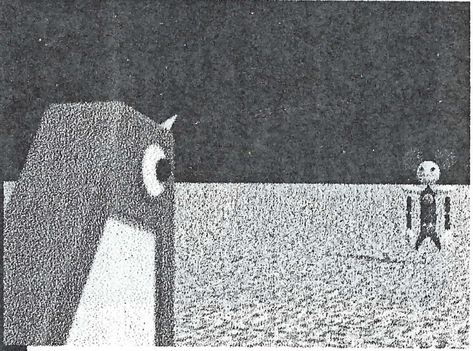
Starting with the Opening Ceremonies on Friday evening, con chairman Dave Merrill and Joe Vecchio began the ball rolling. The guests were introduced to the teeming mob, who heartily applauded each name. More importantly, Dave and Joe held their traditional candy-toss! Afterwards, the room was prepared for Karaoke Oki, in which a number of people got to go up on stage and let forth with such a din of cacophonous caterwauling the likes of which have not been heard since, well, last year' s AWA. Our own editor Dade Bell was among those performing in this event.

Following the karaoke was Japanese Animation Hell. This is something that really has to be seen, because it is hard for me to describe in words. The name is actually somewhat incorrect, because in addition to various extremely strange and obscure anime clips and trailers, there are also short fan-made films, commercials, " bad dubbing" jobs, and all kinds of assorted weirdness. Sort of a montage of psychedelic video madness. It's also hard for me to describe because I wasn't there. Y' see, in addition to AWA, the weekend was also the occasion of Joe' s birthday. So several of us had made plans for a birthday party for him.

Photo: Eric Wampner

We had been given the use of a large room up on the very top floor, and Jim Calbeto and I had done most of the preparations. We had bought a cake, along with sodas, snacks, and the assorted paraphernalia. Numerous JACOites had donated money, both for the party fixin's and for Joe's present. We all gathered in the room and watched some tape with a bunch of 70s opening/closing credits while munching on chips and dip and drinking soda. The only thing missing in all this was the birthday boy himself! During this time, several people left the room to find Joe, who was down in the main room attending the Japanese Animation Hell thing. Those people who left never returned, sucked into the bowels of J-A-Hell. It was Alex who finally located and returned with the guest of honor, and so we were able to commence with chowing down on the cake. Joe was very happy with his gift (music CDs from Dragonball, Maison Ikkoku, and Galaxy Express 999). I' m glad he liked them, since Jim and I picked them out.

Saturday was when the four biggest, most-attended events occurred. The afternoon started with the " Immature" Film And Video Festival, hosted by Matt Murray and C.B. Smith of Corn Pone Flicks. The highlight of this event (for us, anyway) was the long-awaited debut of Dade's Dis Wars — a computer-animated short that pitted the infamous giant chicken mecha, EVA-1776, against the might of the evil Disneyana Galactic Empire. Unfortunately, much of the festival consisted of the Corn Pone guys criticizing everything done by everybody, so there seemed to be little in the way of festive. The best thing that they had to say about Dade's project was that " it was short." Fellow JACO member Spencer Carey also had an entry, but I do not know if it was shown (I left early to attend the Star Blazers panel).*[Spencer withdrew his entries after being angered by C.B. - Dade]*



Dade W. Bell ©1998

Following the Film Festival was the Music Video Contest. This event is one of the biggest crowd pleasers, and this year was no exception. There was a wide range of entries (including one by John Bohlen), and the winners from last year were shown as well. (Personally, I felt that last year's winners were better than this year's.) Notable entrants included " Mmmbop" by Hanson (the video includes various scenes of people puking or killing themselves in assorted gruesome ways), and " I Must Increase My Bust" by Lords of Acid (I think you can figure out the video content on your own). It should be noted that JACO will be acting as the nationwide distributor of the AWA-produced tape that includes the winners' videos. Ken Nabbe is planning to change the JACO website to make it easier for people around the country to get a copy.

Photo: John Sepp

The biggest event of the convention (as it always is) was the Costume Contest, held Saturday evening. Last year a JACO member (Dade Bell) won the contest with his Kou Enshaku costume. This year' s JACO entries were Chris

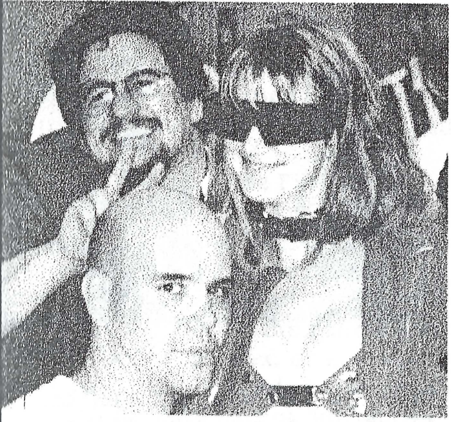


Photo Eric Wampner

Photo Amanda Potella

Barr (who was part of one of the group costume sketches), and the team of Spencer Carey and John Bohlen who created costumes from the shows Armitage and Iria: Zieram. The two girls who modeled the costumes were Threa and Melena (last names withheld for the girls' protection), and they were by far the most photographed people at the convention. Threa, wearing the Armitage costume, won the prize for " Best Mugging To The Audience" and Melena's Iria won top honors with the " Best Costume Of The Year" award. So once again, JACO dominated in the costume contest. The contest wasn't the only place that people wore costumes, however. In the hallways of the hotel one could often glimpse here and there a Sailor scout or an EVA pilot or a vampire hunter. Two of the costumes that certainly caught my eye —one girl dressed in an almost perfect Deedlit outfit (ears and all), and another young lady dressed in Lum's signature tiger bikini. So she didn' t have horns or green hair. Who noticed? The Lum girl wore a really nice Sailor Moon outfit during the contest (I believe she won the award for her category), but Deedlit did not enter, and I thought that was strange, since it was an excellent costume.

Saturday's final event was the convention dance, known by the grandiose title of " The Collective Movement People's Luv Boogaloo" (yes, it is a wacky name, but these are wacky guys). Nothing like seeing wild and crazy conventioneers boogie down to the groovy tunes, yessir. I've heard tales that our own Alex Matulich turned into the Dancin' Machine.

I've also heard that this dance was far better than at previous AWAs due to the tremendous increase in

Photo Eric Wampner

female attendees (thanks in most part to the Sailor Moon series on TV). But I pretty much stayed away from the dance myself, cuz' Corporal Gimp with his steel leg don't dance.

Sunday afternoon was the time for the Anime Family Feud. Former JACOite Daric " Jingles" Kozlowski hosted this gameshow-like event. There were a number of teams present for the opening trivia question elimination round, and JACO kicked some trivia butt to become

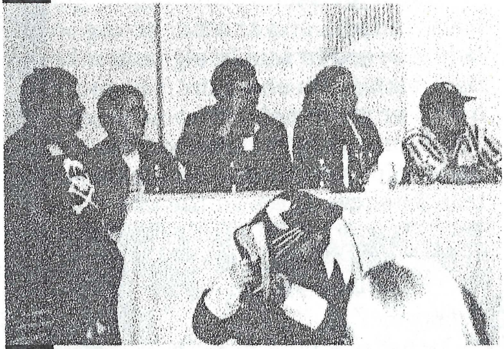


Photo: Eric Wampner

one of the four finalists. The JACO team consisted of Ken " Joey Snackpants" Nabbe, Nicole " Kitten DuJour" Kintner, Fred "General Vague" Leggett, Brian "Giant Bri-O" Oigarden, and myself, Lonny " Big Lonny, The Enforcer" Volat. For those not familiar with Family Feud, here's a real quick rundown —a group of people are surveyed with a number of questions, and those answers are then ordered according to frequency. The game's contestants have to guess what those most popular answers are, with points awarded based on the position that the correct answer has on the list. If a guess is not on the list, the team gets a strike. Three strikes and the team is out. The opposing team can attempt to steal away all of the other team's points with a single right answer. Kind of stupid if you ask me, but that's how it's played.

Anyway, Team JACO managed to rack up a bunch of points each round against their opponents, The Stone Cold Killahs, but it fell on " Big Lon" to score the third strike in every game, letting the Killahs win the match by stealing all of our points. That sucked big time! But it is said that Fortune smiles on fools and little children, and through the amazing lack of common sense on the part of Emcee Daric, we (as the losers) got first pick at the prizes offered to the competing teams. So we, of course, got all the best stuff (especially Nicole, who walked away with a $90 boxed-set of Sailor Moon tapes)! Well, I just wanted to assure my teammates that I knew what I was doing all along, and that I purposely got the third strikes in each game because I knew that we'd get first dibs on the prizes. I' m really not that lame-brained. Honest.

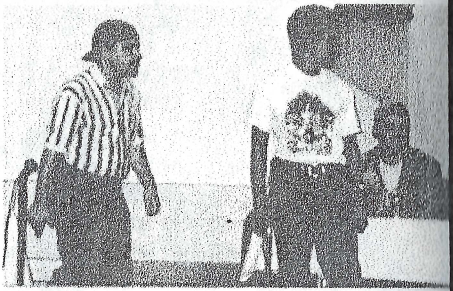


Photo: Eric Wampner

Closing the convention was, appropriately enough, the Closing Ceremonies. This event serves two purposes. One, it gives the convention organizers a chance to thank the con attendees, the guests, and their own hard-working staff for another great assemblage, and to toot their own horns. Two, it gives them a chance to hear from us, the conventioneers, what we liked and didn' t like. And yes, although there were heaps of praise laid at the feet of Dave and crew, there were a few gripes as well. One of those gripes concerned the aforementioned amateur film festival and some of the rhetoric given by the guys from Corn Pone Films who hosted it. The other major gripe had to do with the lack of space in the rooms during some of the events. The two banquet halls that were the location of the panels and events were separated by a moveable partition. But this partition was left in place except during the Costume Contest (and the Closing Ceremonies itself). So many of the events had people standing " wall to wall and tree-top tall" as the old CB vernacular goes. And yet, when the rooms were open during the costume show, those in the back couldn' t see much of anything anyway. The inclusion of judiciously placed TV monitors would have been a big help, and the AWA staff assured us that this would be taken into consideration at next year' s convention. And with a hearty round of applause from everyone, AWA3 came to a close.

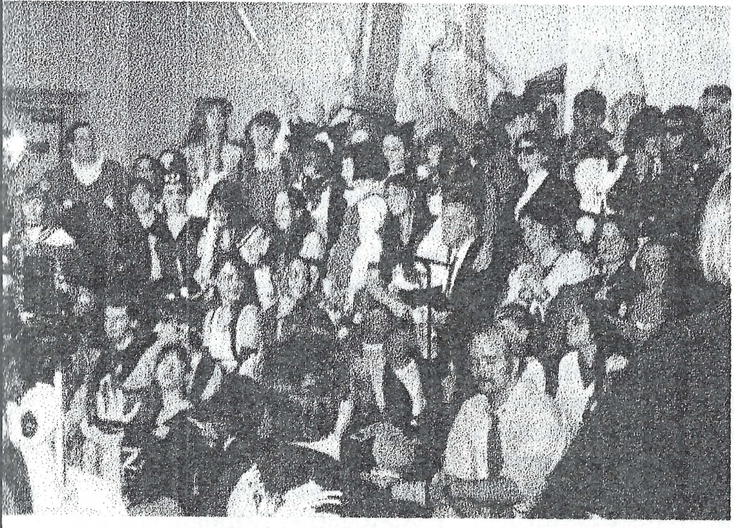


Photo John Stepp

The Dealers' Room

Ah, yes. The Dealers' Room. What is a convention without those commercialistic enterprises vying for the tons of green stuff that gets exchanged by ravening hordes of fans for their much sought after goodies? Anime Weekend Atlanta proved to be no exception to this time-honored tradition. (How could they, after all, since it's the fees that these companies pay that usually permit conventions to exist in the first place?) Some two-to-three dozen different anime-related companies were on hand, displaying a dizzying array of merchandise. Video tapes, laser discs, CDs, model kits, tee-shirts, stuffed toys, dolls, books, magazines, comics, anime cels, posters, scrolls, pins, buttons, knick-knacks, video games — if you wanted it, it was there. There were major video tape/LD producers like Viz, AnimEigo, Manga Entertainment, and AD Vision. There were anime/manga distribution houses like Syco, Radio Comix, and Laser Perceptions. There were hordes of specialty stores like Banzai Anime, Planet Anime, Masters of Tokyo, and Musashi Enterprises. One store in particular, Anime Pavilion, even gave JACO members a 10% discount on merchandise purchased from them.

Of course, most of the items for sale dealt mainly with what's hot on the current anime scene. There were mountains of stuff relating to shows like Neon Genesis Evangelion and Sailor Moon. Ranma products were everywhere, along with Gundam models and even a some Totoro merchandise. For someone like me, whose heart is mostly into the " classic" anime, this was both good and bad. As things stood, my purchases were limited to a few CDs and some comics. But there were others who just kept coming out with sacks of newly gotten goodies. Still, I was quite happy with the few acquisitions that I made. My " highlight" of the dealers' room was meeting face-to-face with Keith Johannsen of Musashi Enterprises, someone who I' d been e-mailing with for several weeks prior to the convention regarding a game that his company had produced (see elsewhere in this issue for the particulars).

Outside Entertainment And Shopping

As if there wasn't enough to keep a person occupied during the whole damn weekend, Atlanta provided many fun things to do, places to eat, and stores to shop at. All along Buford Highway there were numerous little Asian strip malls (Atlanta seems to have an Asian population roughly equivalent to that of all of Seminole county) with quaint little shops. About 98% of what was sold in these stores were typical tourist stuff, but occasionally one would find a gem if he or she looked hard enough. I myself was lucky to find the first two volumes of the Space Cruiser Yamato manga in a small used bookstore. The books were in perfect condition, and sold for $2.50 each. I' m sure that if I had found something like that in the dealers' room at the convention, they' d have wanted at least twelve or fifteen bucks. Each. And then there was Iwase Book Store. This place is like the Walden' s of manga. Shelves and shelves (and even more shelves) of books and magazines, all written in Japanese. And one huge section of it was devoted to Japanese comics. For those who are into it, Iwase is definitely Manga Heaven.

Unfortunately, as with the dealers at the con, those places that had any anime-related products were limited to the current " rave" shows. Sailor Moon, Evangelion, and Dragonball Z were featured in toys, dolls, coloring books, sticker sets, and the like. For someone like me, looking for items from shows that I preferred, shows that were popular years ago, was pretty much a futile exercise. One thing that was kind of neat though was going into some of the grocery stores and seeing some of the products on the shelves. Years ago, when the first generation of JACOites were watching Joe's "straight-off-of-NHK-television" copies of Dragonball and Dr. Slump, we would see these commercials for food products that had little toys related to anime programs, like tiny snap-together Gundam models and such. So there, on the shelves, were many of these same products! Boxes of candy with some Sailor Moon trinket or packages of instant ramen with a Dragonball novelty under the lid. It was pretty cool. And then there was . . . Pocky! Ask me about it sometime.

Eating was one of those bodily functions that many people seem to forget about when they' re at a con. Actually, I should say eating properly. But there were a great many restaurants in Atlanta, with a wide variety of dishes to please the palate. Unfortunately, they are all called Waffle House. Actually, this is a gross exaggeration. Not every restaurant was a Waffle House. I meant that every other restaurant was a Waffle House. In between all of the Waffle Houses are Atlanta's other dining establishments. There are two that I'd like to mention here. The first is a little Vietnamese place (whose name escapes me) that Alex enticed a bunch of us to try. The main dish that they served is something called Pho Ga. It's a kind of ramen noodle soup that, for just a few bucks, came in a bowl big enough to bathe in! Even I, who usually downs four to six Quarter Pounders and/or whole pizzas (you should see me on Monday Night when WCW Nitro is on), found it to be fulfilling.

Photo: Eric Wampner

The other place, one that has gained a reputation from previous AWA conventions, is the Umezono, a Japanese restaurant located in Marietta. On Sunday evening, about a dozen or so of those of us who were still in Atlanta decided to go there for dinner. Our meal, however, was marred by some major miscommunication problems. I'll spare you all the gory details; suffice to say that the manager and several servers probably hope that we never return. The biggest hassle was that we were placed in a semi-private dining hall with a group comprised of convention guests. While this was not a big deal for us (I got to sit next to Amy Howard), a couple of the guys from the other crew were not too happy, especially considering that some of their friends was forced to sit elsewhere. Added to that was the fact that many of those who brought us the food spoke poor English (which resulted in a couple of mixed-up orders) and problems with billing (the term “ separate checks” had no meaning to the staff there). It was one big effing mess, I tell you. At least the food was tasty.

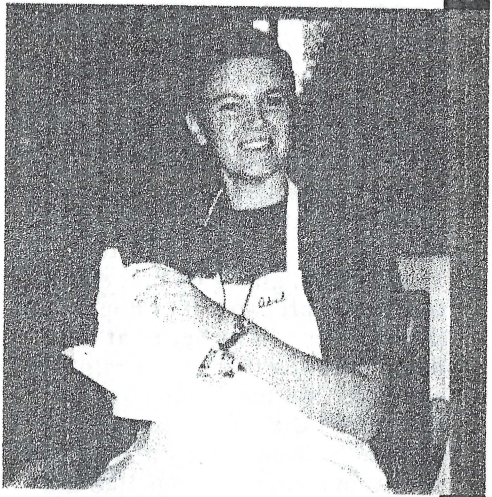


Photo: Eric Wampner

Personally though, I liked the Pho Ga better.

Anime Weekend Atlanta: 1998

ANIME
WEEKEND
ATLANTA
JAPANESE ANIMATION FESTIVAL

Even before this year's convention got off to a start, plans were already being made for next year. The Marriott North Central has agreed to be the location for 1998, as they were most pleased with how many rooms were booked this year. (Out of 288 rooms, 278 were reserved by convention attendees.) The convention has been slated for October 9-11 next year, giving us just eleven months to prepare. It is hoped that the weather will be better at that time. Perhaps the lack of rain and somewhat warmer temperatures will permit the use of the hotel's outside facilities (like the pool and pool-side area) for things like the karaoke and such. Personally, I don't see what the problem with the temperature was. But then again, I was the only one outside in the morning (when it was in the mid 30s) scraping ice off of his windshield while wearing a tee shirt and shorts. Everybody else was walking around wrapped up like the Mummy. Buncha wusses.

In addition to the hotel already agreeing to be the site for the convention, almost all of the dealer's will be back next year as well. According to the AWA's official web-site www.anime.net/~awa/ table space in the dealers' room is already sold out! I'm sure that the competent directors and staff will solve the one or two little gremlins that plagued this year's convention, so that next year AWA will really rock. So the site is lined up, the dealers are lined up, the guests will be back (looking at some of the flyers from other cons around the country, it seems that this is all some of these people do), and JACO will be back. So what's wrong with that?

Photo: John Stepp

Each of the previous three AWAs has been better than the one before it. Since this was my first, I only hope that this continues, because it sure won't be my last. It started with just a couple of hundred people at a run-down fleabag of a hotel (one described as " the place conventions go to die") and has grown to over a thousand attendees being

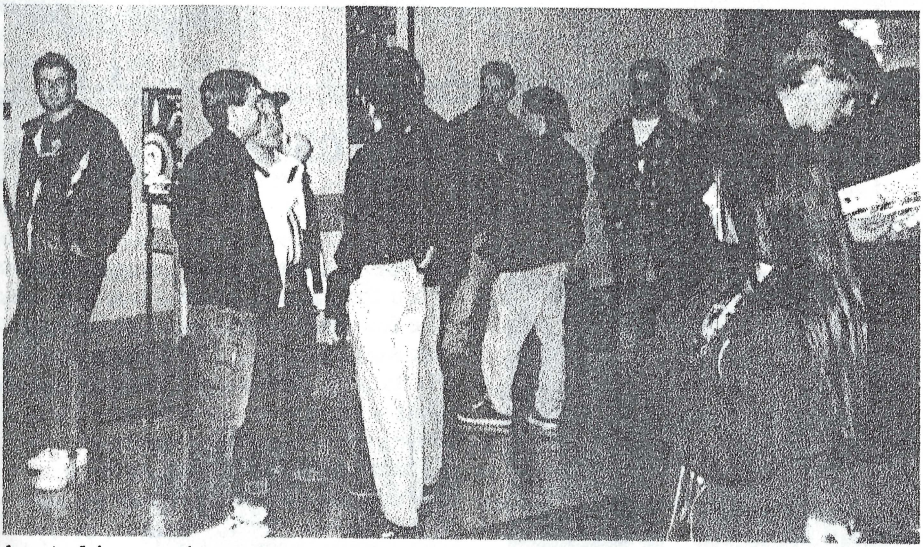


Photo: Eric Wampner

hosted in a major convention hotel site in just a few short years. Already, words have been bantered about by some of the JACO officers and members concerning the possibility of our own club hosting an anime convention in the Central Florida area, possibly before the turn of the millenium. Already we' ve become a player in the game, with our second year as part of MegaCon coming up in just a few months. We' ll just have to see what the future holds for the merry members of the Japanese Animation Club of Orlando.

Sex And Violence

By now, I' m sure everyone is saying " But Lonny, where's the sex and violence that you promised us at the beginning? I mean, it' s a wonderful article about the convention and all, but we want to see some good stuff." Well, never let it be said that Big Lon The Enforcer fails to disappoint his loyal readership.

It was Saturday night, while everyone was down at the Luv Boogaloo, that I met the Grabonsky twins. They were a hot duo, to be sure. All of nineteen years old, with figures to make Barbie green with envy and a predilection towards group activities involving leather and chocolate syrup. I knew I was in for the night of my life. So while Cindi and Mindi prepared the room by affixing an assortment of accouterments to the bed and sharpening their stiletto heels, I went to Kroger's grocery store to get the syrup and some whipped cream and cherries. Getting back to the hotel, I went straight for my room, not even stopping to acknowledge the greetings from some of my friends in the lobby. As I entered the room, closing the door behind me, there was the sudden snap of a whip and

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Dave's Con Report!

A Special From AWA's Chairman

By Dave Merrill

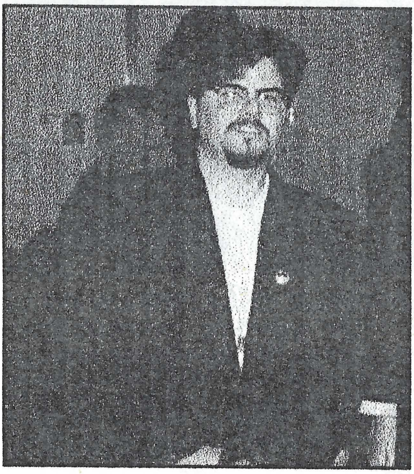

Photo: John Stepp

Well, as is customary with these things, here's how what has been offically been designated "The Most Important Event Of Late 20th Century" looked to its con chair, namely me. Feel free to pass this along to anyone I may have forgotten.

I've been going to cons for something like fifteen years now, and I gotta say that this year's AWA was the most fun I've ever had at a convention, and that includes cons where I've actually managed to pick up girls. What made it so fun for me? Well, I managed to convince all my friends who live way far away that they really needed to come to the con this year. So I got to see all my pals, and what's more, they all got along with each other! It's almost unheard of.

For the other two AWAs, I was forced to spend a lot of time going to and from the airport, since I was one of the few staff people with a working car and a working knowledge of Hartsfield. But we got enough people trained last year, so this year I wasn't down there nearly as much.

I was down there a lot, though, because the rotten weather up and down the east coast delayed *every single* flight that we were there to meet. Some folks didn't get in for up to six hours behind schedule. By Saturday, though, things had cleared, and we managed to get people out on Sunday right on time.

Anyway, I got to actually attend a lot more of the con this year, which meant I had a better idea of what was going on, where I needed to be, what needed to get set up, etc. There are a thousand and one things that have to happen, and sometimes if I don't do them, they don't get done. I remember the bulletin boards on Friday afternoon, for instance, and we got them up and working in time to do some good.

For me, getting anything done at all at AWA is almost a miracle, because going anywhere in the hotel means passing all the staff, guests, and attendees, most of whom know me and want to say "hi". Sometimes they want to say other, more urgent things, and then the mission I was on gets sidetracked. So this means a simple journey to get a tape from the hotel room turns into a three-hour odyssey.

Anyway, Thursday I spent most of the time at the airport (getting Ed Hill and Neil Nadelman), driving to the hotel, back to the airport (to get Dan Baker), over to the house to get more stuff, and then back to the hotel, at which point I went to sleep, and then got up Friday morning to make another airport run (Kathy, Carol, and Mike -the "Garuman Ambassadors"). So it was about one o'clock on Friday before I was able to settle in and get some serious con action going. This means finding people, finding tapes, meeting guests I haven't met yet, getting function rooms up and running, and making sure everybody has what they need...

Photo: Eric Wampner

Anyway, here's the gist of what happened:

BAD STUFF

Hotel room was too small (asked for double, got single), guy shoplifted in the Dealer's Room early Friday (he got caught), guy got pickpocketed during the Costume Contest (stay tuned for more details), um, flights were late at the airport. That's about it. I got a little cranky Sunday morning because of no food, but that got fixed. I drove like a maniac in the rain on Thursday to make a flight that turned out to be cancelled, but didn't even get a speeding ticket (there IS a God!)

GOOD STUFF

Just about everything else. The dance was lots of fun, more people danced than ever before and we had a better mix of music (people think they want us to play nothing but anime music, but they really don't). I thought I had better one-liners during last year's costume contest, but we had more contestants this year. Speaking of the CC, we also had lots more cute girls this year, not only in the costume contest, but at the con as a whole. Gender parity will be achieved someday!! I got some neat cheap stuff in the dealers room, I got to meet Amy Howard (who had a lot of fun), Elin Winckler, Toshifumi Yoshida and his amazing gun collection, Tony Butler, etc, and I got to meet Lea Hernandez for the first time in, oh, say, eight years, and I got to see my pals Don Yee and Kuni and Steve and Bill Mayo and of course Bruce and Mundee and Neil and Carl and Ed and Dan Baker, whom I hadn't seen in five years, and Shaindle, whom I hadn't seen since she got married back in '93, and Jeff Tatarek, who needs to come down here more often, and Jeff and Nettie who ran a great art show, and the JACO guys, the Gatchapalooza folksincluding Jen and Alara, and Jen actually made sure I got my VCR back! Thanks! And Laura Block, who also needs to come down here more often, and oh jeez, everybody. Since I mostly go to cons to meet pals, this was sort of

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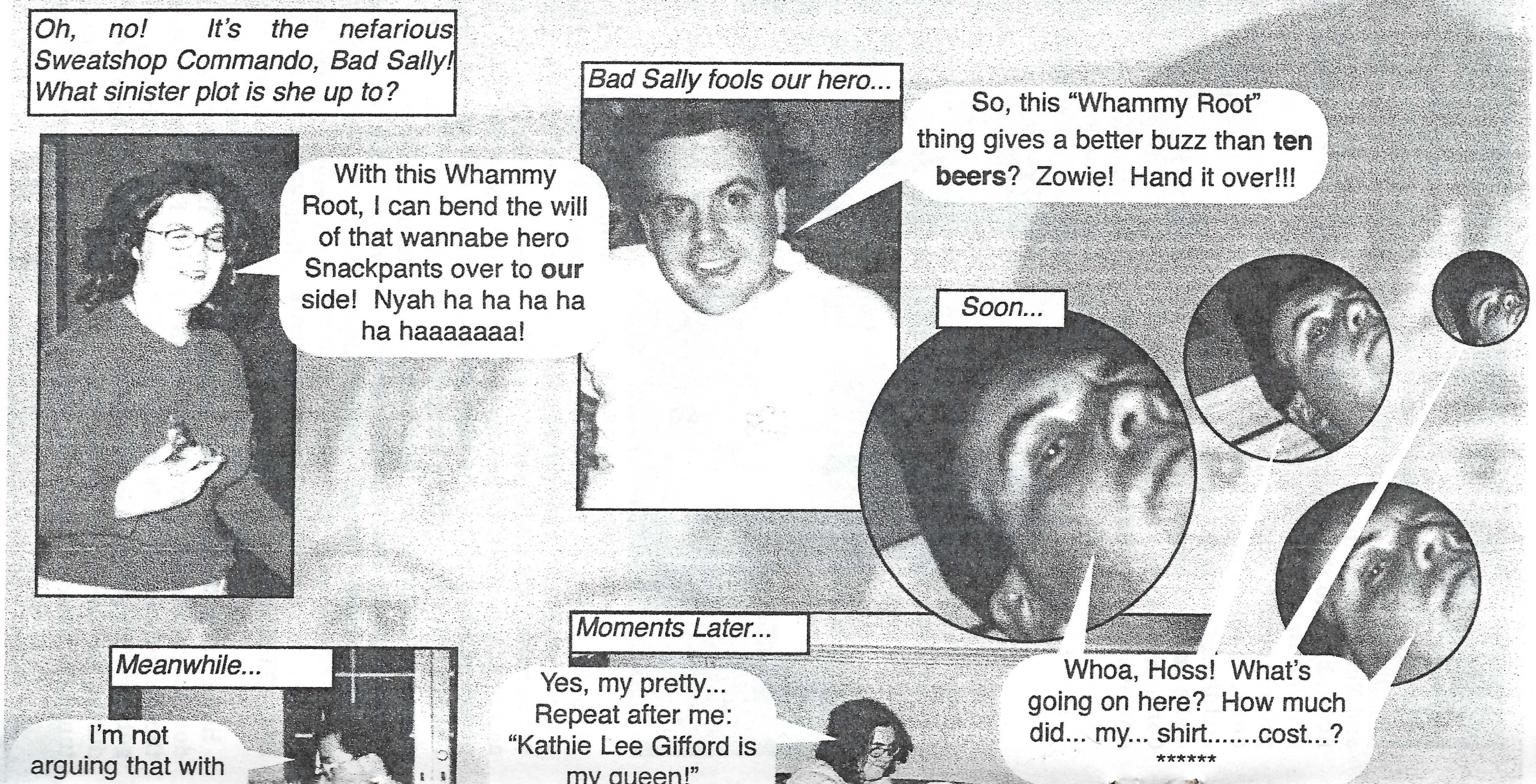
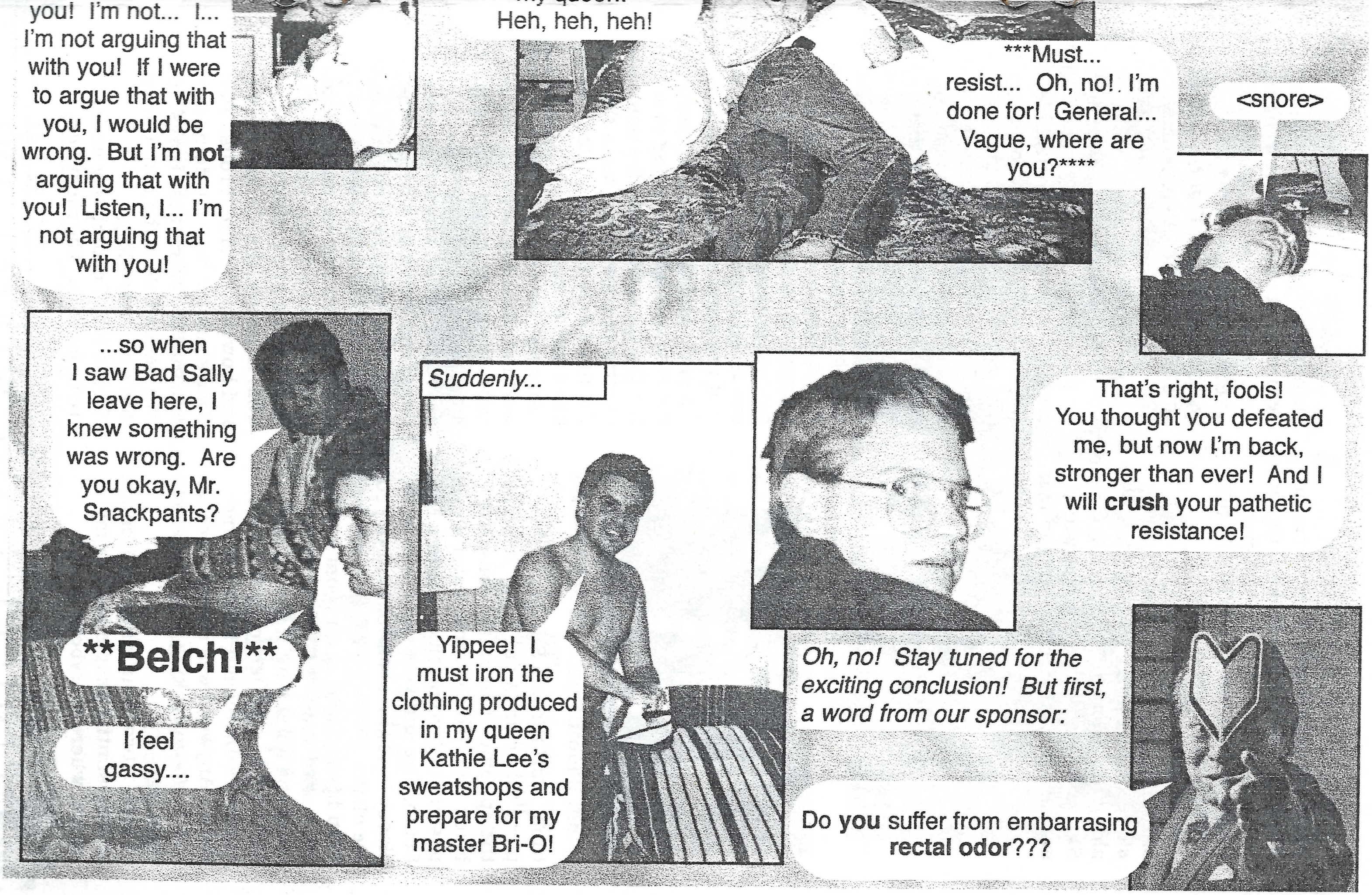
The EPCOT Federated Army In...

The Snackpants Shuffle!


Oh, no! It's the nefarious Sweatshop Commando, Bad Sally! What sinister plot is she up to?
With this Whammy Root, I can bend the will of that wannabe hero Snackpants over to **our** side! Nyah ha ha ha ha ha haaaaaaa!
Bad Sally fools our hero...
So, this "Whammy Root" thing gives a better buzz than **ten beers**? Zowie! Hand it over!!!
Soon...
Whoa, Hoss! What's going on here? How much did... my... shirt.......cost...?
******
Meanwhile...
I'm not arguing that with
Moments Later...
Yes, my pretty... Repeat after me: "Kathie Lee Gifford is my queen!"


you! I'm not... I... I'm not arguing that with you! If I were to argue that with you, I would be wrong. But I'm **not** arguing that with you! Listen, I... I'm not arguing that with you!
Heh, heh, heh!
Must... resist... Oh, no! I'm done for! General... Vague, where are you?*
<snore>
...so when I saw Bad Sally leave here, I knew something was wrong. Are you okay, Mr. Snackpants?
Belch!
I feel gassy....
Suddenly...
Yippee! I must iron the clothing produced in my queen Kathie Lee's sweatshops and prepare for my master Bri-O!
That's right, fools! You thought you defeated me, but now I'm back, stronger than ever! And I will **crush** your pathetic resistance!
Oh, no! Stay tuned for the exciting conclusion! But first, a word from our sponsor:
Do **you** suffer from embarrasing **rectal odor**???

pal-overload for me. There were no hassles, nothing got broken, the hotel isn't trying to screw us, and everybody (and I mean EVERYBODY) tells me they had a great time.

Beer of choice this year was Old Milwaukee, with Laughing Skull a close second (it's a local micro), along with Modelo Negro and good old Shiner Bock. We also drank wine, vodka, and Carl Horn served gin martinis. Carl threw a Sunday night party that stands out in my mind as the epitome of an anime con party - black light (so the tonic water glows), posters of revolutionary leaders Mao, Lenin, Che and yers truly, lots of classy booze, and a room full of people chatting up a storm. We moved it from his room to a con room and it went until about 3:00am at which point the hotel shut it down *[The Rent-A-Cop was particularly memo - rable<G> -Dade]*, but I don't blame them. Anyway I was alseep, because I had to go to freaking work the next morning!

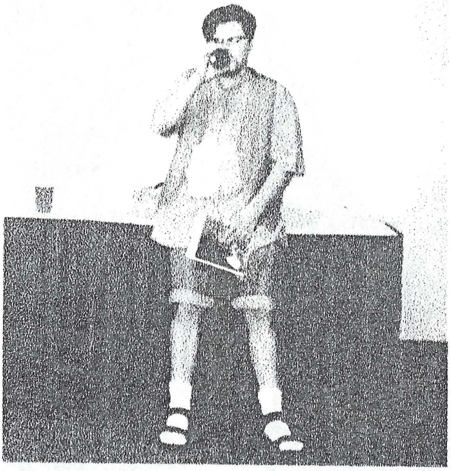


Photo: Eric Wampner

I took a two-hour lunch on Monday to help shuttle people back to my house, where everybody pawed through my precious stuff until I returned, at which point we started taking people back to their planes. A wreck on 285 prevented Dan and Carl from making their flights, but we got them bumped to other planes. Tuesday I got up early, took Neil to his plane, went to work, returned home, took Shaindle to HER plane, and then went BACK to work. The rest of the week has been the same. Boy, did we get busy at work.

I see where I didn't even mention the T-shirts, selling 'zines, watching Alphaville, Kayt's dress made out of camouflage net, the fight that didn't happen, the time I dug up a fan to help ventilate Larry Drews' room after somebody spraypainted something in it, the Japanese film crew that showed up to document our costume contest for posterity, and the mysterious facial imprint in one of the walls that the hotel staff found on Monday. Oh yeah, and the beer I dropped in the stairwell while rushing to make the Costume Contest. It's some kind of strange convention when the most the hotel gets trashed is done by the con chair himself...

Anyway, for us guys, AWA is a year's worth of planning, arguing, phone calls, taping, xeroxing, writing the flyers and the program books, delivering flyers, anwsering questions, and worrying whether this crazy idea, which sounds fine in our heads, will actually work in real life. Once the con begins, once it's too late for us to actually change plans, then we can start relaxing. No matter what happens, the die has been cast and however it rolls, it rolls. People always ask me how I'm doing at the con, and the anwser is always "great!" Two weeks before the con, though, that's another story.

I get a lot of completely undeserved credit for AWA. The most I do, if any-

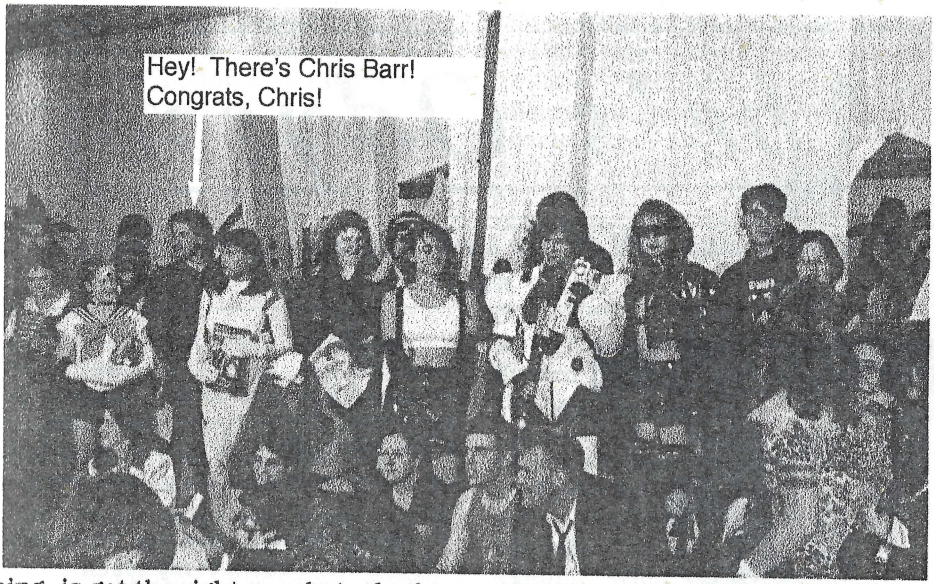

Hey! There's Chris Barr! Congrats, Chris!

Photo: John Stepp

thing, is get the right people to do the right jobs, and sort of use whatever intuition I have to guess what makes a good panel topic or a good headline for a flyer. What makes the con work, I think, is that most of the staff are working the jobs they're interested in and have fun at. Plus, half the attendees have stuff in the art show, are costuming, or are involved in cel painting or some other activity. It's a very interactive kind of con, where the lines between staff, guest, and attendee are almost blurred beyond recognition. Much like this paragraph. Anyway, next year's AWA is in the same hotel on October 9-11! I hope to see each and every one of you there, though it will usually be as I'm racing through the hallway. BTW, the new issue of Let's Anime is out, so if you want a copy, let me know!

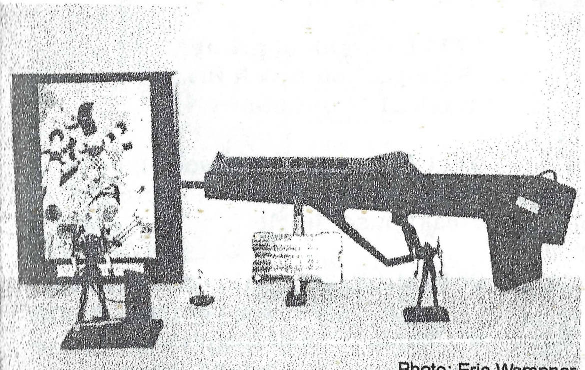


Photo: Eric Wampner

ANIME
WEEKEND
ATLANTA
JAPANESE ANIMATION FESTIVAL

I would like to thank Dave for letting me reprint his con report in our humble fanzine.

-Dade W. Bell

Abe's Odyssey

A Sailor's Account of His Most Amazing Discovery Yet: AWA!

By Abraham Nantin

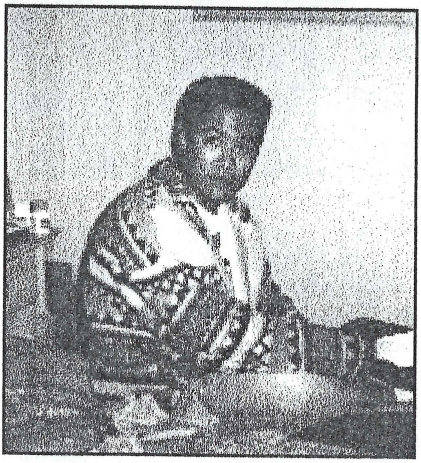


Photo: Nicole Kintner

I woke up at 6am. The sun wasn't up. It was a gray morning. I took care of business in the bathroom and dressed out. I lugged my bags to the truck, popped the front section of the hard cover, and dumped my gear into the bed careful not to damage the 9 glass cel frames. I opened the door, then shut it. I forgot to eat breakfast. That, and I also forgot my wallet and "pull-over" papers (license, registration, proof of insurance). I returned to my apartment.

I started cooking at 7am. Scrambled eggs, Honey Nut Cheerios, milk, orange juice, hot dogs, chicken slices, cheese, granola bars, and a multivitamin. Yummy. I used the bathroom one more time, found my "pull-over" papers, and bid my sleeping roommate a good weekend.

I started my mini tape recorder as I warmed the engine of my black Toyota Tacoma (Dade Parlance="rice-burner"). I wanted to log every event that would take place. The morning mist was light and the defroster took care of whatever was left fogging my windshield.

0710 Trip start. ODOMETER~21290. Tank~1/4.

0724 Full tank of gas at the "Racetrac" on Beach Blvd. Tuned into 99.1 "Hot Country."

0741 *MILE~309.* Jacksonville city limits on I-10 W. Heard "Outback Steakhouse" jingle.

0840 *MILE~380.* Valdosta 49 miles.
MILE~395. Encountered debris @ 75mph. One of the pickups I trailed too close behind threw a board out of the bed. It shattered on the asphalt and hit the Caravan in front of me. I thought it was soft cardboard, until pieces of it made dangerously *hard* impact sounds on my grill and windshield. Scared the crap out of me. Changed lanes.

0907 *MILE~416.* Crossed the Georgia state line. Camper swerved in left lane. Follow flow of green mustangs in traffic.

MILE~428. Entered Valdosta city limits. 99.1 fades out.

MILE~433. Passed Moody AFB.

MILE~590. 10 gallons used.

MILEAGE~29 mpg.

1228 Reached Atlanta city limits. Took 285 east, because the sign and directions said so. I merged into heavy traffic. Defensive driving tactics: OFF. Attack Mode: ON.

1240 Followed the swirly pipeline all the way around. Turned off at the I-85 exit. I guess I was lucky. Based on the PJaco log for last year, I guessed the guys must have been in heavy traffic to miss the exit. I had a free lane all the way down. I stayed in lane four (from left to right) until I saw the turnoff signs for EXIT 32. Then I saw the triangular castle of the MARRIOTT loom over the fence on the right. Good thing I was in lane 4, there were a lot of cars bunching up to the same exit. I followed the pack down the offramp.

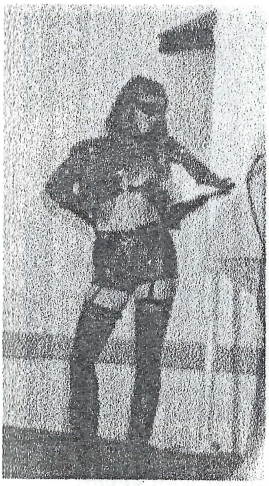


Photo: John Stepp

Suddenly, the single lane exploded into 4, no, 5 open lanes with a stop light a stone's throw away. The pack scattered like roaches, taking intended lanes to get where they needed to go. Critical thinking time. The MARRIOTT was seen on the left, no right side of the freeway. Head for lane 5, QUICKLY. I slammed the turn signal, glanced out the right quarter glass window and saw one car in the far lane, closing fast. I risked it. I dropped the clutch into 4th, and floored my Toyota into the lane and closed the 500 yards to the light in under 2 seconds. I'm not kidding. Whew! Eat your heart out, NASCAR.

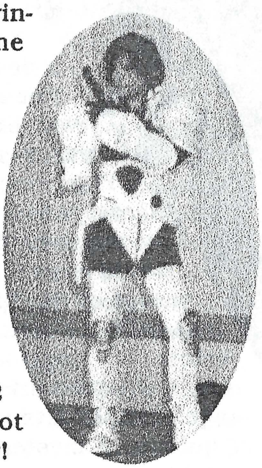


Photo: John Stepp

I was at the turnoff intersection of Clairmont Rd. I was in the right most lane. I turned right onto Clairmont and made my way down to the road, looking at every stop light for signs to the hotel. On the second light, the red letters of the MARRIOTT stood out on an island tower sign. The words were barely visible above a clump of short bushes. I signalled and turned right onto a long, winding road.

1305 *MILE~673.* Pulled into the Marriott parking lot.

ODOMETER~21963. Well, I made it. Second solo flight out of Jacksonville, I arrived intact, with time to spare. SAVE THE WORLD.

At first glance, the Marriott was a normal 15-story building. I grabbed my backpack, which had my essentials, and entered through the revolving doors into the lobby.

It was triangular. Interesting. The entry was at the triangle point, lead-

Photo: John Stepp

ing into the open lounge and vast, triangular ceiling 15 stories overhead. The sight of all the well-lit hotel levels was awesome. Florescent lights ran everywhere. Somewhere along the sides, a head would poke out to view the vertigo of the space between the ceiling and triangle lounge below.

I turned my attention to the lounge. People sat in chairs, chatting quietly. A mysterious piano on the right corner of the triangle played music, with nobody at the keys. Further right, hidden behind a square column, was the reception desk, located on the right wall.

"Hi," I said the the lady behind the terminal.

"Good afternoon. May I help you?" She said.

"Checking in." I gave my name and Discover card number. In 5 minutes I was in the system. The desk clerk handed my credit card back along with a magnetic pass card for my room. Room 619.

"This is your card to get into your room," she said.

"Do you have a weight room?" I asked.

"Yes, we do. It's located to your left." She pointed in the direction of the piano. "The fitness center is on this side, across from the piano. You can't miss it."

"Is it open late?"

"It's open 24 hrs. You can use your card to get in."

"Groovy," I said. "Thank you." I made a mental note to use it later this evening.

I entered the Convention Center, down the long hall, to the registration desk. I saw a brown-haired guy with familiar glasses standing next to the doors. He wore a grey pullover and a camera.

"Jim!" I waved. I received my pre-registered package and official convention badge, which was a chessy profile picture with my name covered in plastic and stapled closed. My back was turned when Jim called someone.

"Hey Dade," he said. "Look who's here!"

Suddenly, I was being hugged and lifted off the convention floor by a giant bigfoot! Oh, it was only Dade.

"Abe!" He exclaimed.

"Hey, stud. How you doing?" I was glad to see my old friend again. After introductions and recalling memories, Dade led me into THE DEALERS' ROOM.

Photo: John Stepp

The last convention I attended was seven years ago, Project A-kon 2. Nothing I experienced before prepared me for what I saw inside.

"Wow!" This place was humongous. Along the walls were crammed anime displays, tables and stands. In the center were more island tables, stands and displays. Almost everything you thought you wanted was sold here.

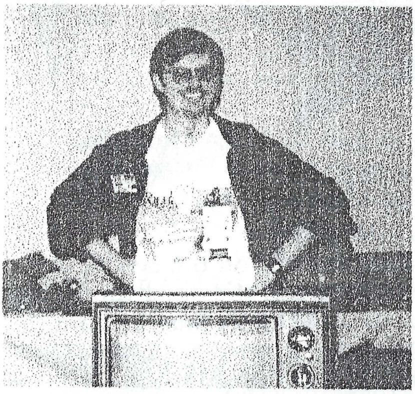
Anime CDs from old shows, dolls,

robots, manga, comics, toys, models, clothing, cups, pins, pens, patches, car windshield visors,

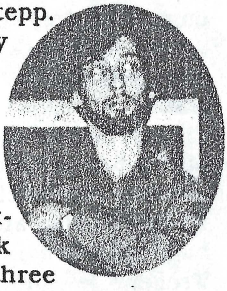
Photo: Nicole Kintner

clocks, toys, t-shirts, videos, toys, laserdiscs, cels, posters, tapestries, wall scrolls, and all those toys! Wow!

Here, I was reaquainted with Fred Leggett and John Stepp. I then completed my "lap" of the room and headed back to my room. At the hall entrance, I met Ken Knabe.



Photos: Eric Wampner



I followed the walkway around the back of the piano to the three elevator doors. At this moment, I saw other conventioneers. They were dressed in costumes or anime t-shirts and buttons. The elevator door opened and I stepped in.

"6, please," I said to the guy closest to the buttons. The opening ceremonies haven't started and I'm already enjoying myself.

I found myself standing against the left wall facing the stage. The partion closed off both Century wings, alowing only half of the crowd to enter and sit for the opening ceremony. From my position, I could video record the scene. The only hatred I found was in the stage lights, the few that faced the stage were also angled to face the front row of the audience, including me. The lights hindered the quality of the recorded footage.

Dave Merrill gave the benediction.

"Okay, con's over," he said. "See ya!"

The audience cheered and applauded. I got a kick out of that. The ritual of throwing candy followed. I was hit in the head by a flying mini recess peanut butter cup, which I picked up and logged it on tape.

I remember the three sacred rules of the convention: 1. No Vampires 2. No F&%$ing Klingons and 3. No "Magic The Gathering(TM)" card-playing.

The guests of honor were introduced. Two that caught most of the attention were Amy Howard and Steve Bennett. Amy was the voice actress of Nova from the English-dubbed anime "Starblazers." Steve was a popular anime artist who made appearances at other conventions. His Union soldier's cap caught my eye *[even though it was a Confederate cap <Grin>- Dade]*. I heard he was a civil war buff. I would have liked to talk about

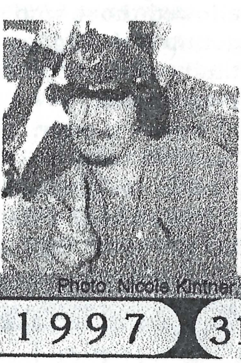


Photo: Nicole Kintner

Gettysburg with him.

At certain times, a Big wooden hammer appeared in the audience.

Finally, Dave set a Magic card on fire. This was the closing ritual to end the ceremony. The audience rejoiced when Dave gave up his lighter and instead used Amy Howard's plastic Bic.

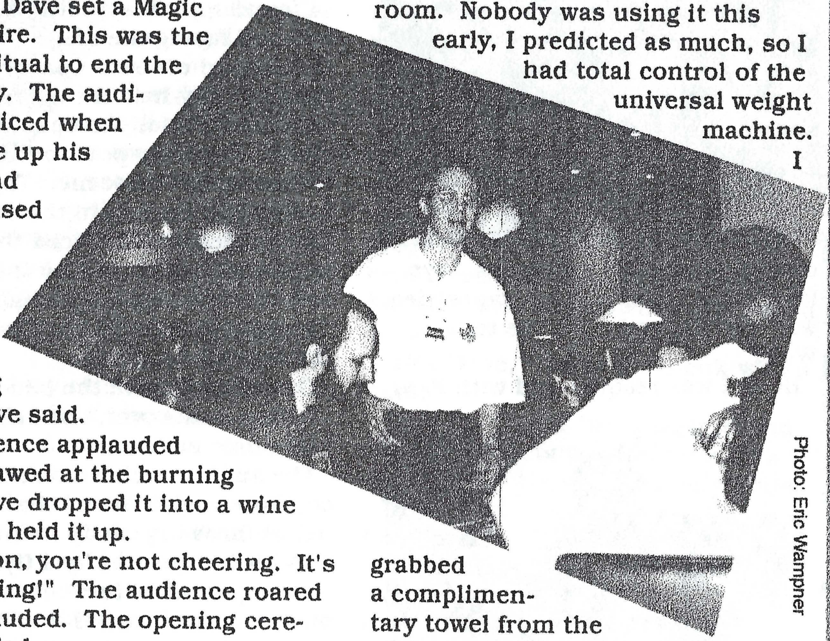


Photo: Eric Wampner

"A cleansing fire," Dave said. The audience applauded and was awed at the burning card. Dave dropped it into a wine glass and held it up.

"Come on, you're not cheering. It's still burning!" The audience roared and applauded. The opening ceremony ended.

I found myself still standing against the left wall facing the stage.

The next event in the Century room was Karaoke. I noticed a lot of the singers followed a written lyric sheet. I thought they had to memorize the entire song in perfect Japanese, however these sheets seemed acceptable, so I let it slide *[This is because we didn't have a TV screen with the words projected on it like usual. -Dade]*. My overall opinion of this event was that it allowed those who wanted to sing to get up and sing, no matter how awful their voices were. The karaoke event ended.

I woke up early. I stepped out of room 619 at 6am. I didn't wait long for one of the three elevators to take me down to the lobby. I was going to take advantage of everything this hotel offered. For $80 a night was too expensive.

I slid my card in the electronic key and opened the door to the weight room. Nobody was using it this early, I predicted as much, so I had total control of the universal weight machine. I grabbed a complimentary towel from the wicker shelf.

I worked out on the bench, the pulldown bar, the other thingy that worked the chest muscles and the thing that worked the biceps. In and out in under 50 minutes. That's all you need anyway. Any longer would be "a waste of time." I tossed the complimentary towel into the wicker basket beside the shelf, took a final swig from my water bottle and exited.

I returned to my hotel room, threw off my t-shirt, and prepared two chicken sandwiches with lettuce and tomato. I also ate one of the bananas I bought from the 24hr Kroger a few blocks down from the Marriott. I hopped into the shower by 7:30.

Nobody was awake yet, so I bought an adult movie, ordered through the television options and billed to my account at the front desk. I've always wanted to order one. I was disappointed. The title I chose was a ruined copy, the sound was out, the picture was snowed and blurred. I changed to another channel in hopes to remedy the problem. I lost the connection. Now I was out $8.49 for a cheesy X movie that lasted 5 minutes.

I called the front desk and explained my situation. The operator cancelled the order on my account and told me that in order to view any movie, the channel cannot be changed and the TV cannot be turned off, else the movie is cancelled and you are billed. Now I know better.

I ordered another one. This time, it was good. Enough said.

At 9:30, I left my room to rendesvous with anyone on the convention floor.

It was 10am when I stood with my friends outside the dealer's room. Dade, dressed in his Gendo costume complete with glasses, Ken, Jim, Fred and John were waiting for the doors to open and let the mindless, cash-ridden anime fans enter.

Photo: John Stepp

Who took our picture *[see photo caption]*?

Photo: John Stepp

I walked another lap around the room. No much has changed. A few tables had fewer items, probably sold. I didn't have the urge to buy everything like I did seven years ago. I credit my anti-impulsive manner to my truck, I have payments to make on it. So, my taste changed from "I want everything-charge it!" to "Do you have *this* or *this*? No, well okay. Thanks."

I remember attending the model and and cel painting workshops. I stayed too long at the cel painting workshop. I missed Dade's official entry of "Eisner Wars" at the Immature film festival. The music video contest was spectacular. Some kid paid $60 for a cheesy anime cel during the auction break between music videos. $60! The character's eyes were squiched shut, there was no accompanied pencil drawing, and the cell was poorly matted. FANS!

The moment of glory was the Costume Contest. The costumers assembled an hour early outside the Century rooms, behind a line guarded by AWA staff armed with wooden swords. The audience line grew from the end table outside Century West, down the convention hall, all the way out through the lobby! Fortunately, John Stepp (Project JACO photographer), Jim Calbeto (group photographer) and myself (just a guy with a palmcorder pretending to be an official videographer) were strategically sitting at the phones adjacent the head of the line.

The chances were slim, but I was confident we'd enter well before the line. The staff was very strict, only official photo-g and video-g and guests were allowed in first.

"Okay," the staff in the black trench and uzi motioned at us. "Photo and video, go." Yeeha, "We're in the pipe, five by five."

The first thing I noticed was the great red sea of rows upon rows of hotel chairs. I followed Jim up the center aisle to the 5th row and found our seats. The second thing I noticed was the white figure standing along the left wall. It was an 8ft Mirage Knight from "5 Star Stories!" decked in white polyester, with a red emblem on the chest. The figure wore a mask and held a taller, slender scythe. John took pictures of Dade and Joe posing next to it. As Dave Merril started the costume contest, the Mirage Knight crossed the floor in front of the stage, stood for photos, and exited clearing the double doors by an inch.

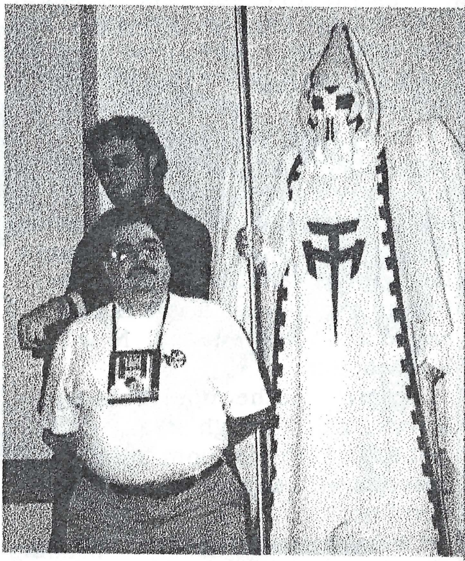


Photo: John Stepp

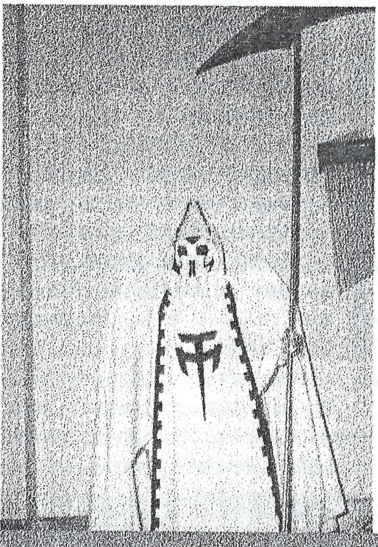
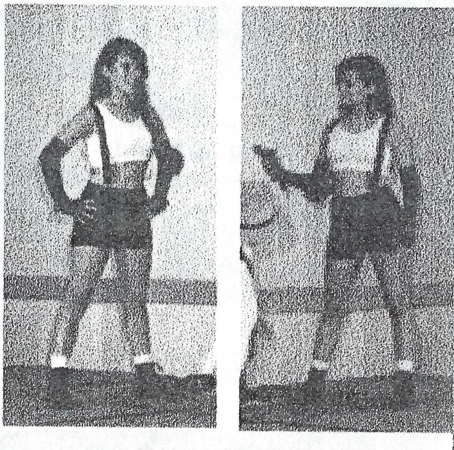


Photo: John Stepp

Other costumes caught my eye. The women wearing the costumes of Iria from Zeiram, Armitage III, and Tifa from Final Fantasy VII caught



Photos: John Stepp

my eye. They modelled their costumes beautifully. One amazing entry that I have to mention was a young seven-year old girl, dressed as Sailor Jupiter. She sang the entire *Sailor Moon* theme song in perfect Japanese!

Photo: John Stepp

The worst event during this convention was neither in the convention hall nor in the hotel. My truck was parked in the far corner of the lot, away from the security lights. It was broken into sometime between the music video and costume contests. The only thing stolen was a $5 bill I kept in the ash tray. Thank the Lord. To compound my situation, I needed to complete my museum research paper. The nearest available terminal was at Kinkos on Buckeye. It was after midnight when I pulled into the Kinkos parking lot and around 3am when I completed the first four pages. I drove back to the hotel, parked under the light this time, and moved everything of value into the bed. I locked the hardtop and walked tiredly to my room.

The next morning, I worked out in the weight room for the last time. I ate breakfast in my room and took a shower. Those night trips to the 24-hr Kroger saved me a lot of money. Food totaled $30 the entire weekend, including drink, sandwiches and bananas.

This was my second convention. I met old friends. I felt like the opening words of Babylon 5. I was happy and sad, angry and shocked for a time, until my insurance company replaced my broken window.

Photo: John Stepp

Profile: Amy Howard

Former JACO President And Current AWA Officer, Joe Vecchio, Interviews The Voice of *StarBlazers'* Nova

Begin with the beginning: how did you hear about auditions and talk about what happened during the initial screening process and your introduction to the series.

I was working at the Weist-Barron School for TV and Commercial Acting in New York, doing various office functions. A call came in one day, from Kit Carter, the casting director, looking for amateur performers to audition for a new animated program being brought over from Japan. The original title of the show was "Star Force" but was later changed to "Star Blazers". They asked me if I was interested, and I answered with a very enthusiastic "*Yes!*"

The auditions were held at Filmsounds recording studio. I was given a copy of the script and was the last female to audition that day. Two days later, I got the phone call telling me the good news! When the rest of the casting was complete, we met with the producers and were given full details about salary, etc. Were told right up front that is was a non-union production, and we would not be getting residuals, nor would our names be in the credits. I didn't care - I was gonna be on TV!

I'd like to digress a bit here and clear up a rumor. There was an interview done with an actor claiming to have done the voice of "Volgar". In the interview, he said, among other things, that we were all union actors working under the table and the reason our names weren't in the credits was because of our union contracts. *Absolutely not true!!!* This was my first paying job as an actress, so I couldn't have gotten into the union if I'd wanted to. Back then, from what I'd heard about the unions, you needed to have been cast in a union production to get a union card, and you needed a union card to get cast in a union production - the old "Catch 22" deal. Besides which, this was a NON-union production, which are done every day of the week - strictly on the up and up.

I don't appreciate someone who (supposedly!) was involved with a show that I loved doing spreading lies! Kit Carter even said in a recent interview, "I worked with some of the performers on other projects and when they joined the union, I couldn't use them anymore".

Talk about how you went about the work, and some of the other voice actors you met. Feel free to throw in interesting stories and such!

The studio was quite small, and the sound booth was only big enough for one, possibly two people comfortably. More often than not, we would go in and record our lines individually, while watching the animation on a monitor outside the booth. A consequence, of course, was that I didn't always see all of the other cast members, so we really didn't get to spend a lot of time together. The way the sessions were scheduled, I only saw whoever was in either right before me or right after me. Most often, I saw the actor who recorded Wildstar's voice (shame on me, I can't recall his name!), Tom Tweedy, who did Venture and Ed Hayes, who did Desslok. Our recording engineer, Jim Frederickson, was fantastic. He made everything sound virtually seamless.

Sometimes we'd have to do retakes if the dialog didn't match the animation - I'd finish a line and Nova's mouth would still be moving. There were times, depending on how late it was or how silly we were feeling at the time- we would ad-lib and at the end of a line - "Captain, enemy ships on the radar screen- *by the way, what's for supper?*" I wish that we had all stayed in touch over the years - I know they would be enjoying this as much as I am. The search is on though- wherever they are, if there's a way to find them- I'll do it!

Describe what happened after the series, your reaction when you finally saw (er, heard) yourself on TV, etc. And also your feelings as you led a normal life.

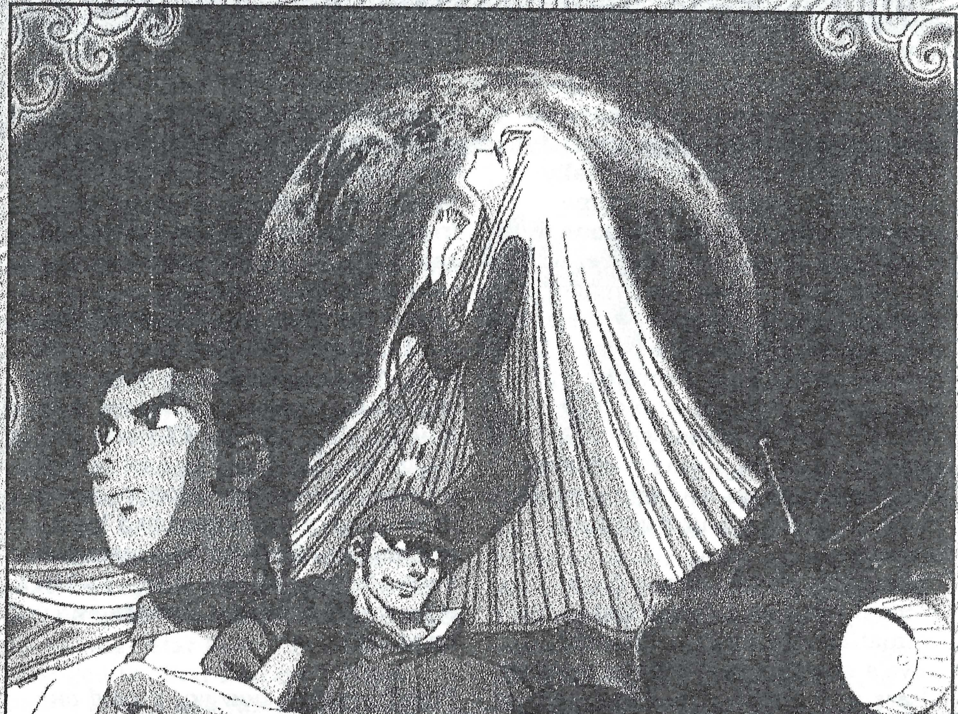
I had so much fun doing the show and was truly sad when it was all over. I went on to work on other projects after "Star Blazers" was complete and on the air, but if I was lucky enough to be home when it was on (I couldn't afford a VCR back in those days), I'd be glued to the TV set with this big smile on my face! It was wonderful to see all of our hard work actually on the air. I'd get phone calls from friends who watched the show and loved it, it was great. The son of one of my friends, who was in the first grade, asked me if I would come in to school for show-and-tell!

After the show was taken off the air, I thought that that was the end of it. What a pleasure it is to know that so many people still love it so much! Over the last 17 years or so,life has taken me in quite a few different directions. Most recently, until about a year ago, I had been working at AT&T for 13 years. I've been clueless all this time - I wasn't even aware that *Star Blazers* was out on video!

Finish up with how you found out about AWA, your experiences there, and what you think of all of us loonies who fell in love with your voice. And of course throw in any funny stories or insights you might come up with.

Full credit goes to one of my brothers-in-law, Bernie. He found the *Star Blazers* websites on the internet and told me about them. I wrote to one of the web page owners and introduced myself. From there, I was introduced to some other wonderful people and the "network" just kept growing! I was introduced to

Gordon Waters and Dave Merrill, the AWA Conference chairman, who very generously invited me to Atlanta as a guest. I was treated like royalty! I met so many facinating people and had the time of my life. More than one person told me that from the looks of it, I had more fun than anybody! It is an honor to be a part of this wonderful show and I'm grateful for the opportunity to tell my story. Thank you!



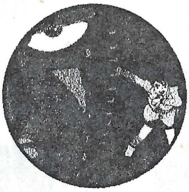
The Top 5

An Interesting (And In Some Cases, Frightening) Cross Section of What Various JACO Personalities Like In Their Anime

Ken Nabbe

JACO President

1. Giant Robo: The Night The Earth Stood Still



2. Mobile Chronicle Gundam Wing
3. Vision of Escaflowne
4. Mobile Suit Gundam 0083: Stardust Memory
5. Legend of The Galactic Heroes

Nicole Kintner

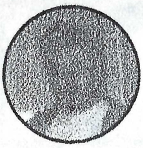
JACO Vice President

1. Fushigi Yuugi

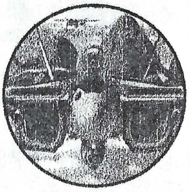
2. Whisper of The Heart (If you Listen Closely)
3. Ah! My Goddess
4. Record of Lodoss War
5. Bubblegum Crisis

Casey Hollis

JACO UCF Liaison



1. Macross Plus

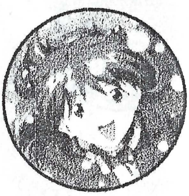


2. Maison Ikkoku
3. Vision of Escaflowne
4. Bubblegum Crisis
5. Laputa: The Castle In The Sky

Erik Larson

JACO Secretary

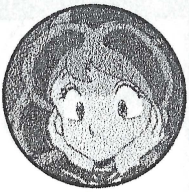
1. Neon Genesis Evangelion



2. Ah! My Goddess
3. Ghost In The Shell
4. Vision of Escaflowne
5. Macross Plus

Lonny Volat

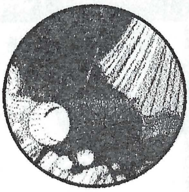
Project JACO Staff Writer



1. Urusei Yatsura: Final Chapter
2. Arrevederci Yamato
3. Wings of Honneamise (The Royal Space Force)
4. Laputa: The Castle In The Sky
5. Lupin III: Plot of The Fuuma Clan

Joe Vechhio

Project JACO Writer



1. Space Cruiser Yamato
2. Lupin III
3. Maison Ikkoku
4. Dr. Slump
5. Mach Go Go Go (Speed Racer)

Eric Wampner

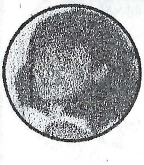
The Finger

1. Armitage III

2. Macross Plus
3. Bubblegum Crisis: Revenge Road
4. Macross: Love, Do Your Remember?
5. Laputa: The Castle In The Sky

Kyla Kintner

Neko DuJour



1. Fushigi Yuugi

2. Ah! My Goddess
3. Record of Lodoss War
4. Ranma 1/2
5. Bubblegum Crisis

Fred Leggett

JACO Director of National Affairs

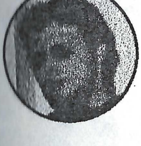
1. Ghost In The Shell

2. Macross: Love, Do You Remember?
3. Maison Ikkoku
4. Wings of Honneamise (The Royal Space Force)
5. Laputa: The Castle In The Sky

Note: Fred never gave me a Top 5, but I'm just about positive these are his choices. =)

Dade W. Bell

Project JACO Editor-In-Chief



1. Aim For The Top! Gunbuster

2. Neon Genesis Evangelion
3. Whisper of The Heart (If You Listen Closely)
4. Pretty Soldier Sailor Moon
5. You're Under Arrest!

To keep this from being an Officers Only List, here is what some non-officers had to say...

Angela Healey

1. Pretty Soldier Sailor Moon
2. Vision of Escaflowne
3. Neon Genesis Evangelion
4. Ranma 1/2
5. Kimagure Orange Road

Joseph Kostura

1. Macross
2. Megazone 23
3. Mobile Suit Gundam
4. Lupin III
5. Crusher Joe: The Movie

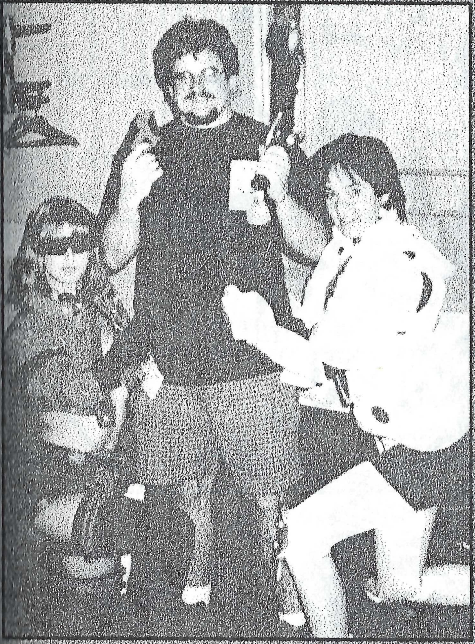
Dave Merrill

1. Future Boy Conan
2. Space Cruiser Yamato
3. Flying Phantim Ship
4. Mazinger Z vs. The Black General
5. The Toilet of Hanako-San

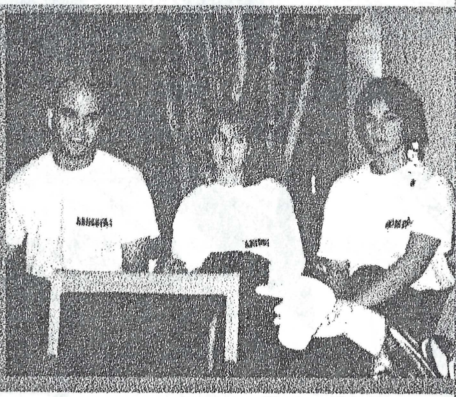
Yeah, I know Dave's not a member of Project JACO, but since this is an AWA Special, I figured his list was of note being that he's AWA's Chairman.

THE ROUNDUP

JACO's Participation In AWA Events Was Strong This Year And We Walked Away With A Few Awards To Boot!



John, Threa, Melena, and Spencer Conquered The Costume Contest, With Only Nettie Hayden's Performance As Their Only Competition. John Also Won Best Presentation For His Iria Gun.



Photos: Eric Wampner

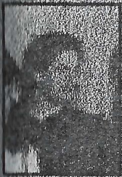
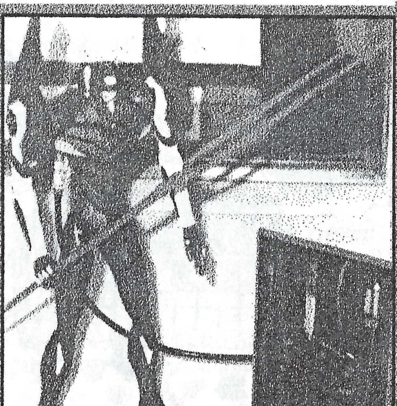
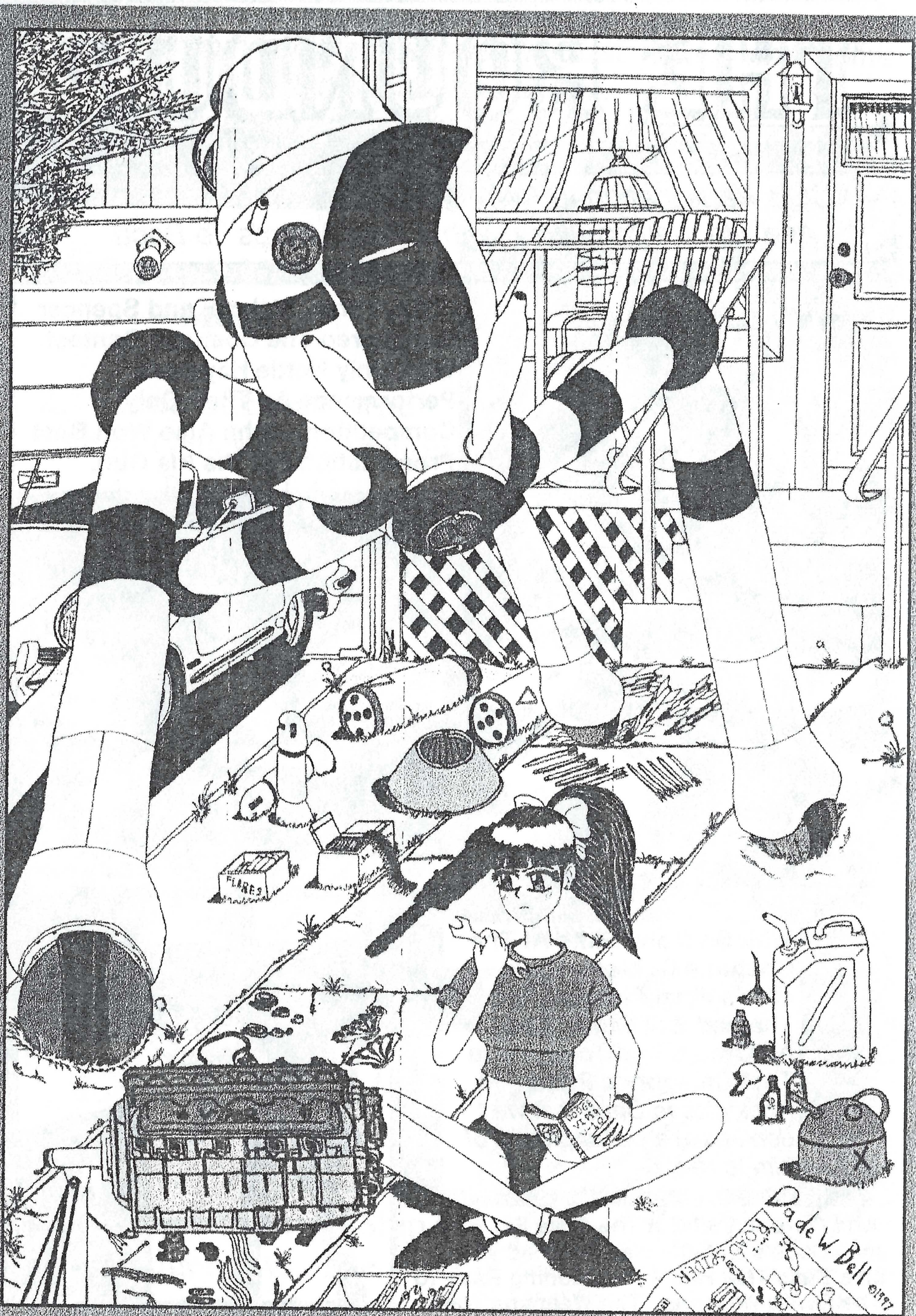


Photo: John Stepp

With So Many Skits At The Costume Contest, Chris Barr's Final Fantasy Themed Skit Stood Above All Others And Took Home That Category's Prize.
Apologies to Chris that we don't have a better picture of him to use.



Dade And Gordon Bell Got The Prize For Best Diorama. Dade's EVA-00' Was Matched With Gordon's Base That Had A Functioning Rack To Hold The EVA's Weapons. The Weapons Were All Removable From The Rack's Tiny Functioning Latches


FLARES
Road Spider
Dade W. Bell ©1997

A Girl And Her Toy

Dade W. Bell's Entry In The AWA Art Show- The Only JACO 2D Art Piece

The Editor Would Like To Thank The Following:

Aimee Cummings
For bringing so much love, happiness, excitement, and support into my life. Without you, I would have never finished this issue- or any afterward. I'll love you forever, my Aimee.

Fred Leggett
My best friend who has done so much for me. What else can I say?

John Stepp
For taking up my camera and graciously accepting the position of being Project JACO's first official photographer. The pictures are beautiful and I wish I would have had 400 speed film for you- next time definitely.

Eric Wampner, Amanda Rotella, Nicole Kintner, Spencer Carey
For letting me use your pictures. Without you, there would have been a lot of visually bare pages, and the Snackpants Shuffle simply wouldn't have existed.

Lonny Volat
For being a dedicated Project JACO writer and for the kind offer to take up the good fight if I found I could no longer serve as Editor.

Joe Vecchio
For the interview with Aimee Howard and the continued support during my tenure as Editor.

Ken Nabbe
For being a good sport as Joey Snackpants. ;-)

Abraham Nantin
For hopping right in and providing me with an article on AWA that was almost as minute in detail as mine from last year. <G>

Erik Larsen and Lonny Volat
For the Christmas Presents. You guys didn't have to do that and I'll never forget your kindness.

Bernadine And Gordon Bell
For providing me with an awesome Nerv jacket that makes me look better than I have in years, and for building an EVA gun that made everybody green with envy.

Jesus
For seeing me through an entire year of producing Project JACO. Thanks for this and for all things.

THE LAST PAGE!

Dateline: Atlanta

The Japanese Animation Club of Orlando Fields One of The Largest Groups At Anime Weekend Atlanta With 24 Members Storming The Gates!

Photo Spencer Carey

See You Next Year!

Pictured (Left to Right):

Back Row: Jim Calbeto, Dade W. Bell, Lonny Volat, Nicole Kintner, Eric Wampner, Casey Hollis

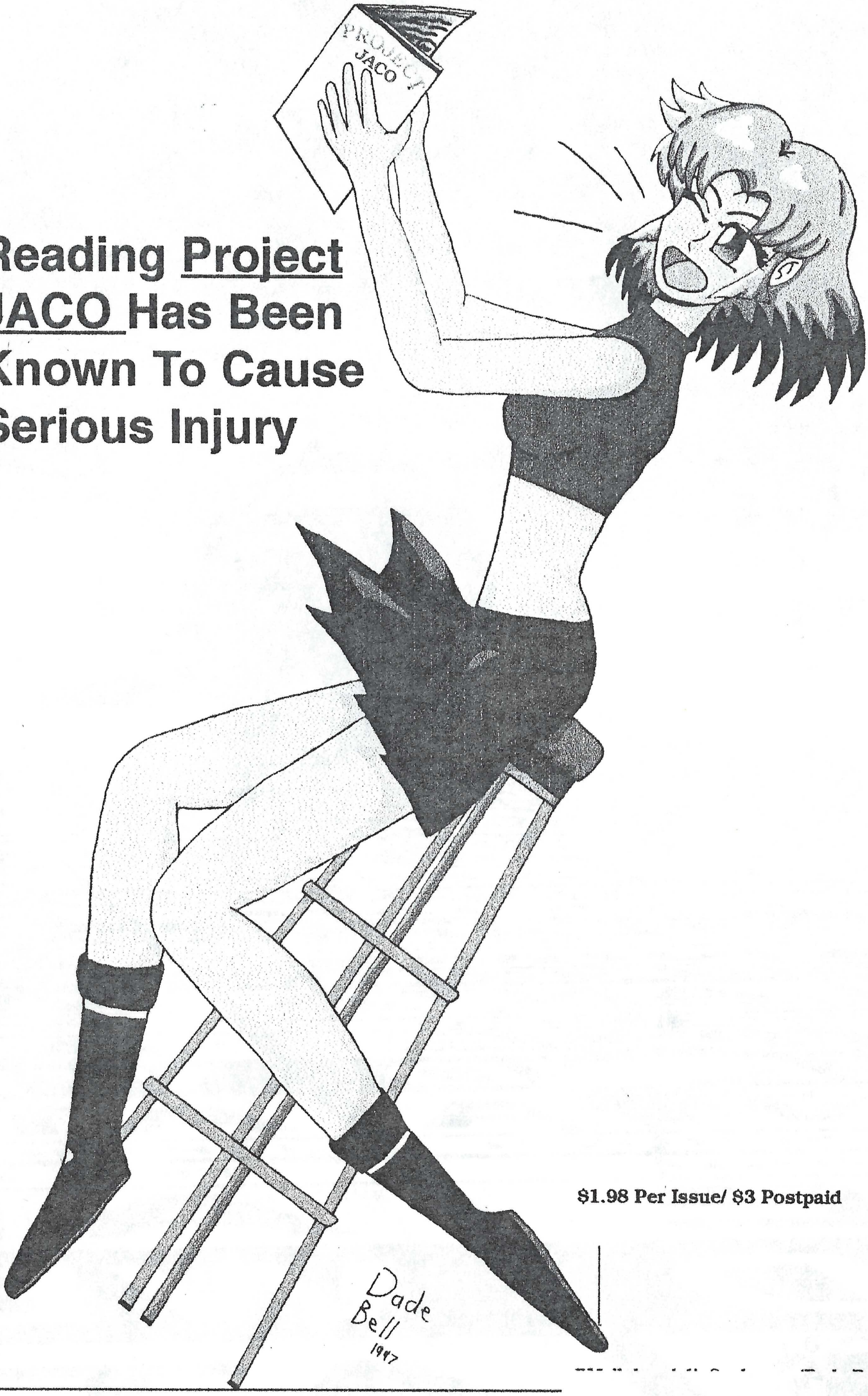
Middle Row: Vanya Applebee, Amanda Rotella, John Stepp, Melena, John Bohlen, Threa, Brian Oigarden, Fred Leggett, Ken Nabbe, Erik Larson

Front: Daric Kozlowski, Joe Vecchio

Not Pictured: Michael Cox, Joseph Kostura, Alex Matulich, Spencer Carey , Jefferson Soler, Chris Barr

Medical Alert!

Reading Project JACO Has Been Known To Cause Serious Injury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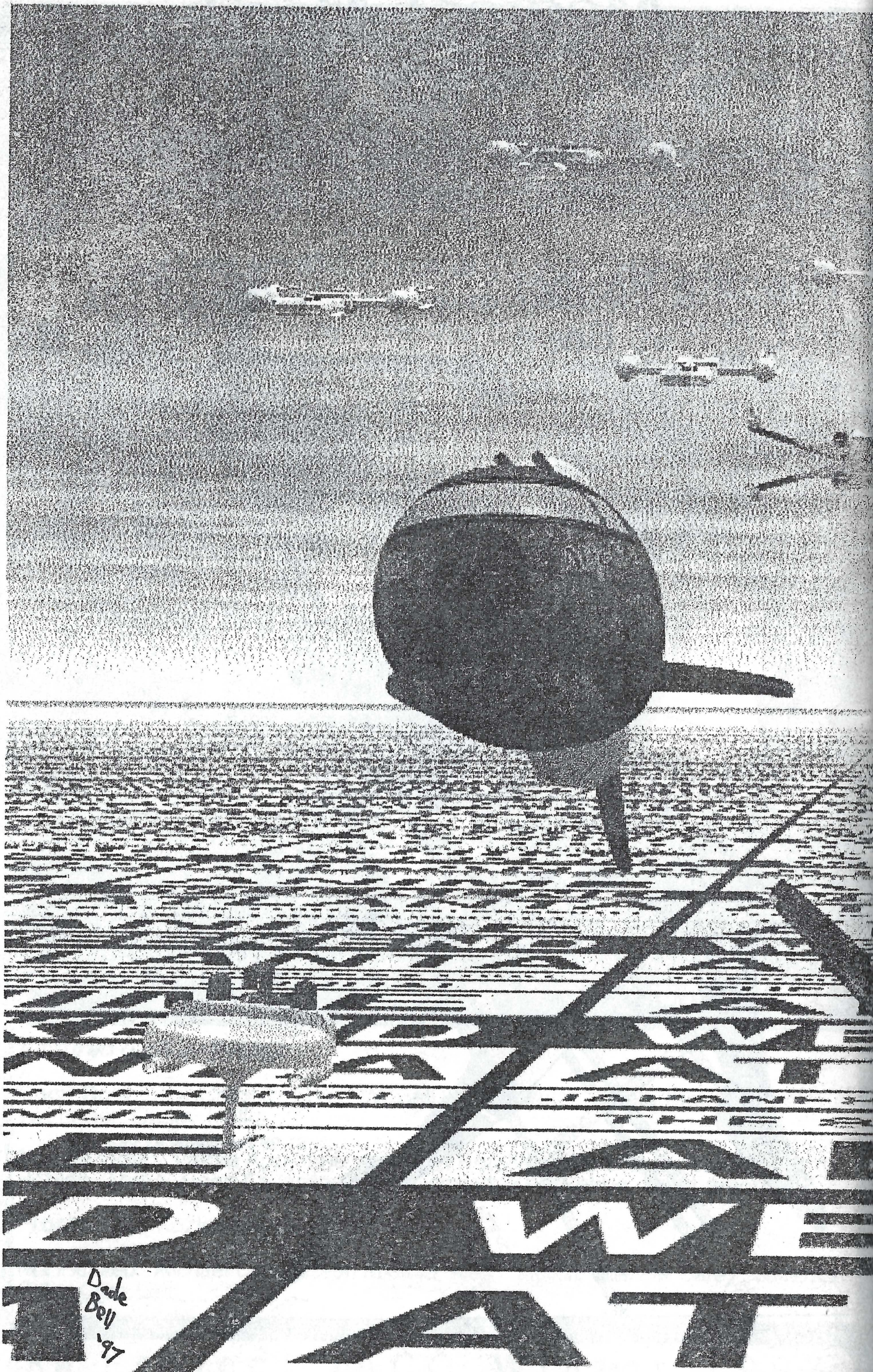
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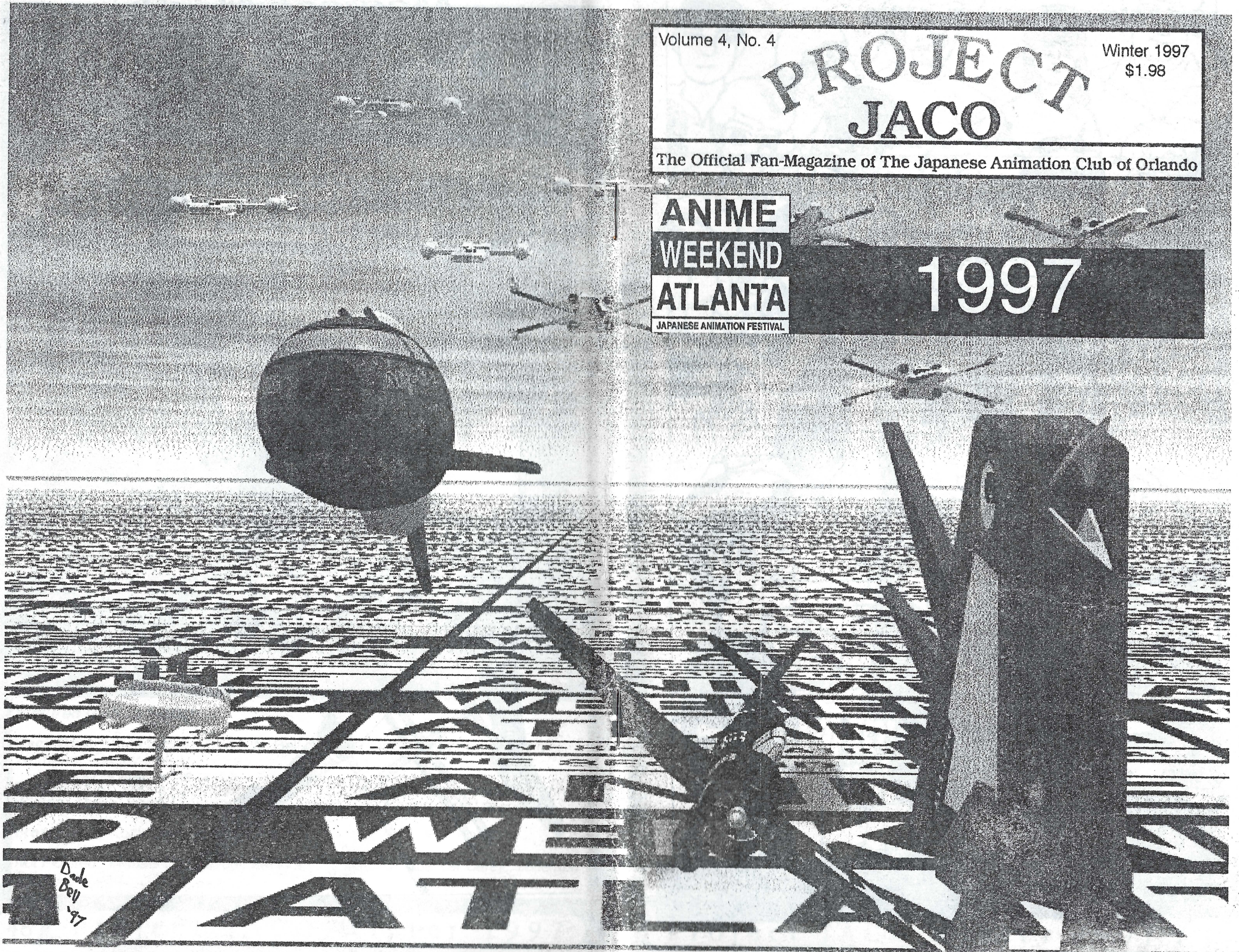
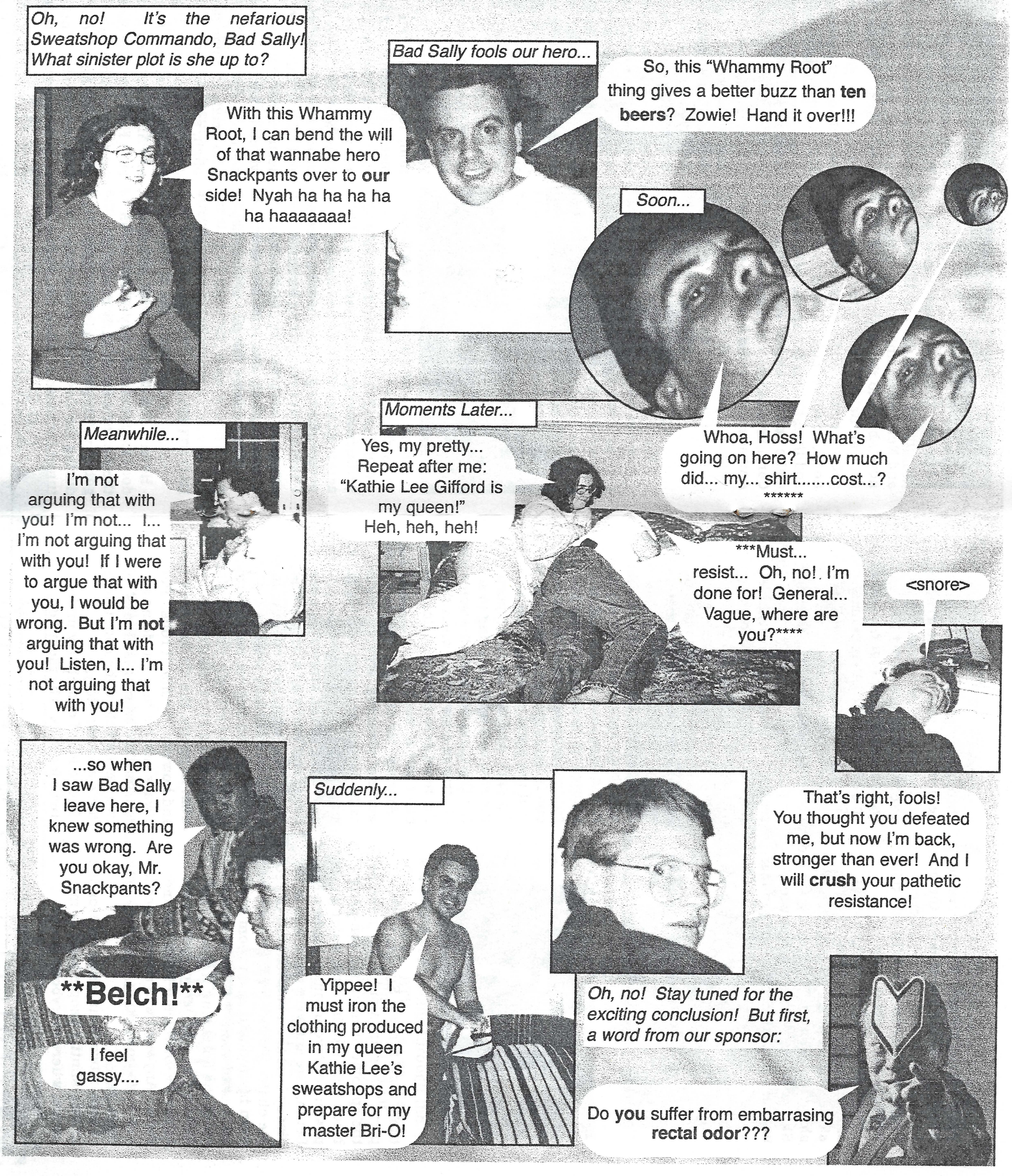
The Official Fan-Magazine of The Japanese Animation Club of Orlando


ANIME
WEEKEND
ATLANTA
JAPANESE ANIMATION FESTIVAL
1997
Dade Bell '97

The EPCOT Federated Army In...

The Snackpants Shuffle!


Oh, no! It's the nefarious Sweatshop Commando, Bad Sally! What sinister plot is she up to?
With this Whammy Root, I can bend the will of that wannabe hero Snackpants over to **our** side! Nyah ha ha ha ha ha haaaaaaa!
Bad Sally fools our hero...
So, this "Whammy Root" thing gives a better buzz than **ten beers**? Zowie! Hand it over!!!
Soon...
Whoa, Hoss! What's going on here? How much did... my... shirt.......cost...? ******
Meanwhile...
I'm not arguing that with you! I'm not... I... I'm not arguing that with you! If I were to argue that with you, I would be wrong. But I'm **not** arguing that with you! Listen, I... I'm not arguing that with you!
Moments Later...
Yes, my pretty... Repeat after me: "Kathie Lee Gifford is my queen!" Heh, heh, heh!
Must... resist... Oh, no! I'm done for! General... Vague, where are you?*
<snore>
...so when I saw Bad Sally leave here, I knew something was wrong. Are you okay, Mr. Snackpants?
Belch!
I feel gassy....
Suddenly...
Yippee! I must iron the clothing produced in my queen Kathie Lee's sweatshops and prepare for my master Bri-O!
That's right, fools! You thought you defeated me, but now I'm back, stronger than ever! And I will **crush** your pathetic resistance!
Oh, no! Stay tuned for the exciting conclusion! But first, a word from our sponsor:
Do **you** suffer from embarrasing **rectal odor**???